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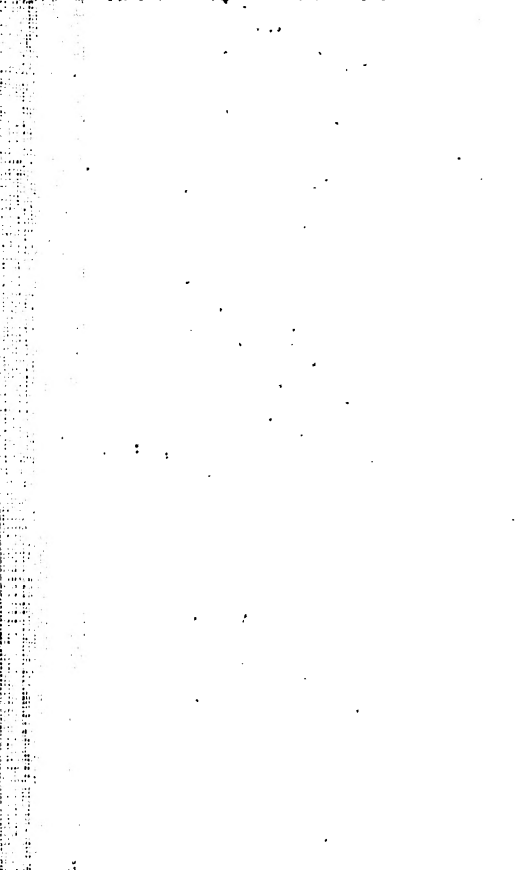
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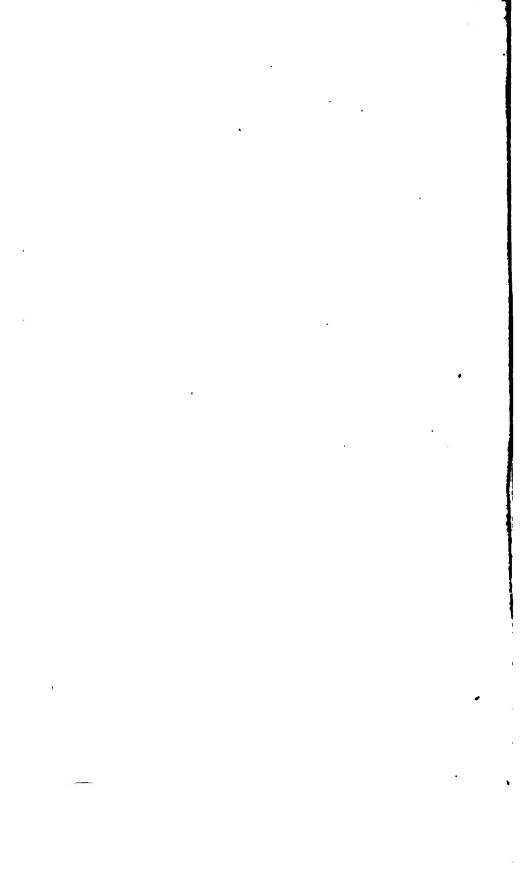
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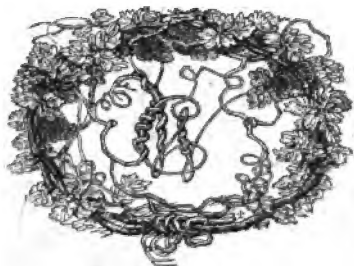




THE
LONDON THEATRE.

A COLLECTION OF THE
Most celebrated Dramatic Pieces.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,
BY
THOMAS DIBDIN,
OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.



VOLUME XII.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WHITTINGHAM AND ARLISS,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1815.

12825.

WHAT NEXT?

A Farce, in Two Acts.

AS PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

Author of Past Ten o'Clock, Twenty per Cent, The Cabinet, Jew and Doctor, Birth-day, Metrical History of England, &c. &c.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRE.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,

BY C. WHITTINGHAM;

**FOR WHITTINGHAM AND ARLISS, PATERNOSTER
ROW, LONDON.**

1816.

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MAY 18 2005

TO
WILLIAM DOWTON,
This Farce

IS MOST THANKFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY
THE AUTHOR.

THE groundwork of the following bagatelle is to be found in a French piece, named after a celebrated one by Plautus, which Shakspeare and Terence have not disdained to copy.

It is a question whether either of those great authors were ever seconded by such actors as those who have supported this farce. Mr. Dowton and Mr. Knight must be seen, to estimate the author's obligations to them; Mr. Oxberry has made much out of nothing; and to Mr. Bartley, independent of his acting, many thanks are due from circumstances of a private nature.

The part of the *Housekeeper* was originally written as a Scotchwoman, to suit the talents of a very respected actress, whose appearance was unexpectedly prevented by a most serious domestic calamity: Mrs. Harlowe, at a very short notice, undertook the character; and has, in its present state, made it of consequence to the piece.

To each of the other performers named in the *dramatis personæ*, the most sincere and well-marked acknowledgments are respectfully tendered.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally acted at Drury Lane, 1816.

Colonel Touchwood	Mr. Dowton.
Major Touchwood	Mr. Bartley.
Mordaunt	Mr. Kent.
Colonel Clifford	Mr. Barnard.
Sharp, Valet to Major Touchwood . .	Mr. Knight.
Brief, a Lawyer	Mr. Hughes.
Snaggs, a country Dentist	Mr. Oxberry.
First Officer	Mr. Cooke.
Second Officer	Mr. Ebsworth.
Postboy	Mr. Minton.
Robert	Mr. Baxton.
Thomas	Mr. Jameson.
William	Mr. Evans.
Harry	Mr. Coveney.
John	Mr. Appleby.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">{</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <i>Servants to Colonel Touchwood</i> </div> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-left: 10px;">}</div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">{</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <i>Colonel Touchwood's Housekeeper, and Governess to his Daughter</i> </div> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-left: 10px;">}</div> </div>	
Mrs. Prudence	Mrs. Harlowe.
Clarissa, Daughter to Col. Touchwood	Mrs. Orger.
Sophia, Niece to Col. Touchwood . . .	Miss Ivers.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *A Village.*

Enter SNAGGS.

Snaggs. **D**EAR, dear, dear, dear! what a busy day. I don't wonder your dentistes in London make fortune, when I have pulled out fifteen shillings worth of teeth, taken three likenesses, and got double postage for carrying a letter, all in one day.

Sharp. [*Entering*] Snaggs! Mr. Snaggs!

Snaggs. Eh! who wants me? any body with the toothach?

Sharp. Has he got it?

Snaggs. Who?

Sharp. Mr. Mordaunt, you blockhead! Did you deliver the letter?

Snaggs. Yes; and he read it, and chuckled, and asked if it come from a lady; so I put on an insignificant look—so—and he was pleased, and gave me as much as you had done.

Sharp. Bravo! why you must be making a fortune here, my jolly Snaggs.

Snaggs. Ay, if all days were like this: but if I didn't draw pictures as well as teeth, I should make but a poorish hand on't.

Sharp. What, a painter too, as well as dentist?

Snaggs. Yes, I takes off heads, and cures the tooth-ach.

Sharp. If taking off heads won't do it, what will? so you paint the rosy cherry-cheeked country lasses?

Snaggs. Yes, I paint fair ladies all black.

Sharp. Profiles in shade!

Snaggs. No; I does it by candle-light, with their heads again a wall, and then seduces them to a proper size: then I cures weak-sighted folks.

Sharp. An oculist!

Snaggs. No; they calls me the eye-man! Poticary says he'll prosecute me for selling nostrums, when it be nothing at all but brandy and water.

Sharp. [*Looks at his Watch*] It wants but ten minutes of the time I'm to go with my master.—You're sure colonel Touchwood wasn't at home?

Snaggs. He! bless you, he be gone to town: if he were at home, you'd hear him before you got within sight of the house.—Main passionate. No, no, there be only muster Mordaunt the visitor, the two young ladies, the servants, and the governess.

Sharp. Isn't she a complete Argus?

Snaggs. No; she's the housekeeper.

Sharp. I mean, isn't she all eyes?

Snaggs. If she be she's plaguily unneighbourly, for she never had a bottle of my stuff since she came to the place.

Sharp. No!

Snaggs. No: nor so much as a tooth, or a picture, pulled out, or drawn, in her life.

Sharp. That is unneighbourly.

Snaggs. And pray, old acquaintance, what has brought you and your master down so sliely?

Sharp. You shall see, if you wait till it is dark.

Snaggs. An odd time for seeing. Here comes lawyer Brief.

Sharp. Then I'll go. I hate lawyers, they're such rogues. Farewell. [Going.]

Snaggs. But, master Sharp, wontee come to the club at night? I be hired there.

Sharp. Hired!

Snaggs. Yes, I comes off shot-free for saying good things out of my own head, from a book I keeps in my pocket: I takes the chair, and keeps the company alive by making 'em all die wi' laughing.

Sharp. Vastly clever indeed—keep 'em alive by killing 'em with laughing. Well, take care of our trunks; don't blab, and I'll be with you sooner than you think. Mum! and without intruding on your pencil, lotion, or instruments, we'll make a man of you. [Exit.]

Snaggs. And as long as I makes a penny o'you, that be all I care for. Oh, here's Mr. Brief! he wur but lawyer's 'prentice t'other day; but now, because he be asked this thing and that by a few fools in the parish, he calls himself a solicitor.

Enter BRIEF.

Brief. Snaggs, who was that just now left you?

Snaggs. That, sir? Oh, that was—a secret, sir.

Brief. No prevarication. Do you mean to say—I ask you your oath?

Snaggs. Me take an oath! I'll be damn'd if I'll swear to please any body. Who might you think it was, sir?

Brief. It looked like a friend's servant of mine from London, and I thought he might be asking for me.

Snaggs. No, sir, I don't think he be in the lawyer line.

Brief. Why?

Snaggs. He says they be all such cursed rogues.

Brief. Scan mag!

Snaggs. Yes, they can mag; that we all knows.

Brief. Vulgar prejudice! I assure you that, even in London, there are not so many pettifogging members of the profession as there used to be.

Snaggs. Not since you be com'd away, I dare say, sir. But I be taking up your time, sir, and your hands be full, as well as mine.

Brief. Only, you'll excuse me, I can't help thinking it's a strange way to live by taking your customer's money and teeth into the bargain.

Snaggs. It be, sir; only I do seldom pull out any o'your customer's teeth till you han't left any use to be made on 'em.

Brief. Yes, I believe you; and I got every shilling that's laid out in the village in our way.

Snaggs. And between us, I wonder there be a shilling left. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

A Drawing-room, open at the back by glass Doors to a Garden; a Door also on each side. The Moon partially seen through the sash Door;—Candles on the Table in the Apartment.

Enter MORDAUNT cautiously from the sash Door; takes a Letter from his Pocket, and approaches the Candle.

Mor. At length I have got away from the company; there's no one here: my watch says eight to a minute. I've made no mistake in the letter I hope. [*Reads*] *Mr. Mordaunt is requested most particularly to be in Colonel Touchwood's drawing-room, which adjoins the garden, at eight o'clock on Tuesday evening: he can easily enter by the sash door, and is desired to keep all interruption out of the way.—No signature!—It must be an assignation from a female! My pulse begins to quicken, and throb with impatience for the lovely writer: methinks I hear her timid step! methinks I see her, with her half-fetch'd breath, bending her downcast eye in fearful search of me, the happy object; who, taking her gently by the hand, shall say—What, in the name of all the devils, do those two men want?* [*Retires a little.*]

Enter from the sash Door, MAJOR TOUCHWOOD and SHARP, in dark blue Cloaks.

Maj. T. Sharp!

Sharp. Sir!

Maj. T. Where is he? You said you saw him enter, and but a little while before us.

Sharp. So I did, sir, so I did; and here he is, sir; here is Mr. Mordaunt.

Mor. And pray, sir, who are you? and who may your companion be?

Maj. T. Why don't you know me, Mordaunt?

Mor. Know you?—what—why—yes it must be too. Major Touchwood! who the devil thought of seeing you here?

[Advancing.]

Maj. T. Hush! are you alone?

Mor. I thought I were till I saw you. But what are you doing, my good friend, in that cloak and wig? why you look twenty years older.

Maj. T. Do I? then I gain my point. I have fought and wounded my colonel: I come here to conceal myself; and as my uncle is reckoned wonderfully like me, I made free with a uniform coat, and popp'd on a wig which he had left at my quarters; and to stop pursuit, and balk suspicion, I mean, with your assistance, for a day or two to deceive the whole family.

Mor. Indeed: and suppose you hadn't met me here?

Maj. T. Oh, I was certain of that.

Mor. Certain! are you in her confidence?

Maj. T. Her! who?

Mor. If you are not, I must beg you to retire instantly.

Maj. T. Retire! I came on purpose to consult you.

Mor. You could not have chosen a worse opportunity: look here, you rogue. [Shows the Letter] I conceal nothing from you; and I rather think this delightful billet is written by some beautiful creature with—

Sharp. With a wig and military boots on.

Mor. So it was you who did me the honour to make this assignation?

[To the Major.]

Maj. T. I did.

Mor. I wish you a very good evening.

Maj. T. What, leave me when I want your assistance?

Mor. I cannot better serve you than by leaving you. I'll go instantly to the sister of your wounded colonel, and bespeak her interest in your behalf.

Maj. T. The last person in the world to mention me to.

Mor. The first you mean; for if the colonel dies, she succeeds to six thousand pounds a year.

Maj. T. And I shall be hang'd. [*Mimics him.*]

Mor. That, of course!

Maj. T. Well, if you must go, do me at least the favour to tell my sister Clarissa that a gentleman wishes to speak to her in the drawing-room; but do not for your life say who it is.

Mor. Your wishes shall be obeyed, and that in the kindest manner; for I have already proved my regard for the brother, by adoring the sister. [*Exit.*]

Maj. T. It's well I've no serious need of that coxcomb's assistance: I merely put him into my confidence that he might not betray my scheme, and prevent my interview with my charming cousin Sophia!

Sharp. How happy you are, sir: you are going to see the woman you love, the one I have married. Oh, how I look forward to the joy of our meeting; and yet it's a pity too, for my Peggy and I are never such real good friends as when we are fifty miles asunder.

Maj. T. Hush, here's my sister.

Enter CLARISSA.

Cla. A gentleman want me.—Oh, my dear uncle, I thought you were my brother.

Maj. T. Look again, sister, and say, "My dear brother, I thought you were my uncle."

Cla. And so I did. Mr. Mordaunt told me in his way that a gentleman, who was not my brother, waited to see me. I guessed his meaning, and flew to see.—

Why you've the oddest wig on I ever saw; it looks just like one of my uncle's.

Maj. T. It is rather like one of his.

Sharp. It would be devilish odd if it wasn't.

Cla. But you had just written to say we should not see you these three months; yet the moment I read your letter, I said to myself, if that isn't one of my uncle's regimentals, never believe me.

Sharp. An odd thing for a young lady to say, on reading her brother's letter.

Maj. T. My dear Clarissa, this is a disguise. I had an affair of honour.

Cla. A duel?

Maj. T. Yes, with colonel Clifford.

Cla. With Clifford?

Maj. T. Yes; don't be alarmed; I received his fire, and fortunately escaped.

Cla. How shocking! *[Rather agitated.]*

Maj. T. Not so shocking, as that he received mine, and with some effect—my dear girl, was the matter.

Sharp. Don't be frightened, miss; my master isn't killed, upon my honour.

Cla. I tremble for the colonel's danger—that is, I mean, for yours. Should any thing serious occur to Clifford—I mean to—to you—I should be most wretched.

Maj. T. I see, I see. In one word, you love the colonel. Well, you shall be a peace-maker, and heal the breach between us. But I wanted an excuse to come and see my sweet cousin Sophy, and gave the duel as an ostensible reason, to keep that shallow fellow, Mordaunt, whom I pretended to put in my confidence, from suspecting me.

Cla. But how could you be so cruel as to fight such a man as the colonel?

Maj. T. How could you be so cruel as to wound him in the heart, when I have only gently touched him on the shoulder.

Sharp. And a very awkward place to be touched on too.

Cla. Well, you need not fear Mordaunt; for Sophy is going immediately to be married to——

Maj. T. The devil!

Sharp. Rather a bad match, I should think.

Cla. And my uncle is gone to put matters in train for the wedding.

Maj. T. Is she at home?

Cla. Oh yes; she, and I, and the old housekeeper, make up the whole of the family.

Sharp. I hope our arrival will be a pleasant little addition to it.

Maj. T. I think, by candle-light, and an affected cold, and assuming something of my uncle's manner, I can pass on some of the family. But who is it my uncle intends for Sophy?

Cla. Your colonel—colonel Clifford.

Maj. T. Clifford! intended by my uncle to marry Sophy, my cousin?

Cla. And privately betrothed to me, Clarissa, your sister.

Maj. T. What's to be done?

Sharp. [*Comes forward*] If I might presume to offer a word of advice——

Maj. T. Let's have it, Sharp.

Sharp. Let miss Clarissa go and inform the old lady that her uncle has returned without bringing the colonel.

Cla. But why without him?

Sharp. Oh, make any common excuse; say he's killed in the duel.

Cla. Oh no, not killed.

Sharp. Wounded then, if you please, by a certain rattling, good-for-nothing major!

Maj. T. Puppy!

Sharp. Oh lie, sir! I didn't say so. In the mean time, I will pretend to arrive, covered with dust, with a letter from you, which you needn't take the trouble to write, proposing for your cousin: to this, after some difficulty, you, as your uncle, reluctantly consent, and order the governess to prepare every thing for the

nuptials. In the mean time, I'll bring an order from his majesty, signed by myself, which obliges you, as your uncle, to repair to head-quarters.—You set out; leave your wig and square-cut accoutrements at the end of the first stage; return in your own hair and regimentals, in the character of yourself; carry off your cousin, on the supposed authority of your uncle; while he returns with colonel Clifford, recovered of his wounds, and only to be recompensed for his lost, rich bride, by a love-match with your sister.

Cla. If I was sure it would end so.

Maj. T. But what will my uncle say, when he does return?

Sharp. He'll give the word to charge, fire, and cut every body to pieces; he'll be in a most tremendous rage. You'll beg his pardon very pathetically; promise him half-a-score grandchildren, as like him as yourself; and he'll know you're too much of a gentleman not to keep your word.

Cla. The closing evening, aided by the two gloomy tapers, will assist your passing on our governess for the colonel.

Sharp. And suppose, sir, you were to have a terrible touch of the toothach; which will be an excuse for concealing your face, and disguising your voice; and to blind the old housekeeper still further, say you'll send to Mr. Snaggs, the dentist of the village, to have it out.

Maj. T. Good. So now, Sharp, go and write my letter to my uncle, and my sister shall apprise you when to appear and deliver it.

Sharp. I fly, sir; and I foresee the happy end of this spirited undertaking: you will marry your cousin, the colonel will marry your sister, and all parties will join to reward the active and ingenious man who conceived, described, and executed the brilliant plan of filling your arms, and his own pockets, with what we each have the most sincere desire for.—I fly, sir.

[Exit through the glass Door.]

Mrs. P. [Without] Where is Clarissa?

Cla. Here comes our governanté. Take an opportunity of sending me away, that I may communicate our plans to Sophia.

Maj. T. I begin to feel a little awkward.—Are you nervous?

Cla. No.

Maj. T. If I had but your coolness.

Cla. And I your impudence.—But, hush! remember my uncle is the most passionate, impatient, unreasonable, good-natured man in Christendom.

Enter MRS. PRUDENCE.

Mrs. P. Miss Clarissa, I have been looking for you all over the house.—What's that? a man?—Nay, stand away, miss, till I know by what right that person is in the house of colonel Touchwood.

Cla. A very common right, madam, that of a gentleman taking possession of his own house. Have you forgot my uncle?

Mrs. P. Bless my soul! your uncle!

Maj. T. Oh—h—h!—Clary, my dear—thunder and fire! why don't you go and fetch the laudanum, and be—— [*Disguising his Voice with affected impetuosity, and holding a Handkerchief to his Face.*]

Cla. That's right, swear a little.

Maj. T. Do as I bid you.—Oh, this horrible tooth-ach!—Fly, and—oh—h!—send my daughter Sophy to me—march! [*Exit Clarissa.*]

Mrs. P. Dear sir, what's the cause of your sudden arrival, and your coming so unattended and unexpectedly? and where's the colonel, who was to have married miss Sophia?

Maj. T. Oh—h—h! [*Groans ferociously*] this infernal face-ach!—My arrival is what I did not expect myself; and the colonel could not make it convenient to come, because he's killed in a duel.

Mrs. P. Killed in a duel!—I shouldn't wonder, but your reprobate nephew, the major, has done it.

Maj. T. Oh—h—h!—I don't think so ill of the major as you do.

Mrs. P. But how did you come, sir?

Maj. T. In one of your—oh—h—h! gunpowder and perdition! send for Mr. What's-his-name, the dentist; I'll have it out.

Mrs. P. Patience, sir, patience. [Rings.]

Enter HARRY.

Harry, do you go directly to Mr. Snaggs, the dentist, in the village, and bid him come back with you, to cure a gentleman who has a violent pain in his face. [*Exit Harry*] It's a sad cold you've got, by coming in the diligence, sir.

Maj. T. Well, but how's Sophia?

Mrs. P. As usual—whining, and pining, and moping, and sighing for that wicked man, your nephew, your honour.

Maj. T. Delightful! [Aside.]

Mrs. P. She's nineteen years old; and before you thought of a husband for her, it's odds but she had made choice of one for herself.

Maj. T. And if she has—oh—h—h!—by the powers! [With delighted Warmth.]

Mrs. P. Nay, do not be angry till you're certain.—See! here she comes.

Enter SOPHIA.

Soph. Yes, 'tis he!

Mrs. P. Miss Sophia, don't you feel delighted at your father's unforeseen arrival?

Maj. T. My dear Sophy, come to your—oh—h—h!

Soph. I have heard, sir, that the colonel is——

Maj. T. Yes, he is indeed; that is—my dear Sophy, tell me frankly, did you love the colonel?

Soph. No.

Mrs. P. And you did love?

Soph. Yes.

Maj. T. Who?

Soph. A very impudent young man.

Mrs. P. It's that rogue, the major.

Maj. T. Ay, that rogue, the major. Is he not a rogue?

Soph. Yes, sir.

Maj. T. Still you love him?

Soph. He has the vanity to think so.

Mrs. P. Yes; and if he knew all, it was but the other day, in your own dressing-room, you said——

Maj. T. What?

Mrs. P. Nay, you need not fear, miss; before I'd betray you, I'd cut my tongue out.

Maj. T. You are prudence personified.

Soph. And you are impudence itself. [*Aside.*

Enter CLARISSA.

Cla. My dear sir, here is the major's valet-de-chambre, with a letter, which he wishes to deliver into your own hands. [*Exit.*

Re-enter SHARP, who delivers the Letter.

Mrs. P. You're a very impudent young man. Could not you have staid without?

Sharp. No, ma'am, I never do; when I can get in.—That letter is of the last consequence. The major would never forgive me for not bringing it, nor himself if he were not to read it.—My poor master, the major, madam, on hearing that miss Sophia was to be married, went stark staring wild.

Maj. T. Young man, repose yourself; this letter requires a second inspection.

Sharp. So do the larder and wine-cellar.

Maj. T. I must have time to digest its contents.

Sharp. And I, to digest the contents of the butler's pantry. [*Exit.*

Soph. May I inquire what news your letter brings, papa?

Mrs. P. Fie, miss! how often have I told you, there's nothing so ill bred as idle curiosity.

Maj. T. You've lost one lover, Sophy, and it would be a pity to lose another: in short, I'm afraid you must marry the major.

Mrs. P. Indeed!

Maj. T. I'm sorry though, very sorry——

Soph. Sorry, sir? why?

Maj. T. That this letter encloses an order for me to join my regiment.

Mrs. P. That's hard.

Maj. T. So when the major comes, receive him as my nephew, and your future husband.

Mrs. P. If you must go away so soon again, you had better take this money. It was left with me by your tenant, Mr. Punctual, in the absence of the steward.

Maj. T. No, I can't do that; keep it for my uncle.

Mrs. P. What?

Maj. T. Keep it till my return.

Mrs. P. Perhaps you mean to pay the major's debts?

Maj. T. I'll pay the major's debts the moment I am able.

Mrs. P. Well, since you wish the major to marry your daughter, you cannot do better than send the money to the Jew money-lender he is so much in debt to.

Maj. T. Send it where you will.

Mrs. P. Who waits there?

Enter ROBERT, JOHN, HARRY, THOMAS, and WILLIAM.

His honour desires you'll go with this money to Moses Abrams, the Jew money-lender, and bring a receipt in the name of major Touchwood.

[*Exit Robert.*]

Maj. T. And do you go to old Grub, the Christian money-lender, and say if he'll take one-third of the major's debt to pay the whole, I shall be very much obliged to you.

[*Exit John.*]

Mrs. P. Bless us! one-third!

Maj. T. It's all that's justly due, I assure you. And now, Sophia, do you receive the major with kindness; and do you, Mrs. Prudence, order every thing proper for the wedding.

Mrs. P. That I will, your honour.—Go you to Mrs. Tiffany, the milliner; [*Exit Harry*] and go you to Mr. Brief, the lawyer, and bid him come and take instructions for the marriage articles. [*Exit Thomas*] Am I not right, colonel?

Maj. T. [*Who has been talking apart with Sophy*] Perfectly right—and harkye, sir, order me post-horses, at twelve o'clock exactly.—Fly! [*Exit William.*]

Mrs. P. How surprised your nephew will be when he arrives and finds his debts paid.

Maj. T. He will, he will; he will be almost as much astonished as his creditors.

Re-enter CLARISSA, in haste.

Cla. Run—fly—escape, my dear brother! Our uncle is this moment arrived.

[*Apart to Major Touchwood; who goes hastily off, followed by Sophy.*]

Mrs. P. Where's your hurry, colonel?

Cla. My dear madam, only do come and look at some of the most beautiful wedding-caps——

Mrs. P. Oh, had you seen the wedding-caps worn in my younger days!

Cla. Fiddle of your younger days! Come and look at La Belle Assemblée of the most beautiful——

Enter COLONEL TOUCHWOOD, in the exact Dress, &c. of MAJOR TOUCHWOOD.

Col. T. Gunpowder and mortars! if ever I met with any thing like this!—Where's my daughter? where's my niece?—Oh, Clarissa, my love, what is the reason that——

Cla. I hope your face is better, sir? [*Exit.*]

Col. T. Face! why, what the devil——Clarissa, I say——Oh, here's old Prudence. What the devil——

Mrs. P. Bless me! I thought your honour was there. [*Points to the Side where the Major went out*] Your commands shall be obeyed; we're going to the milliners. [*Exit.*]

Col. T. Why, I have served five-and-thirty years—have roared at reviews, fired away in battles, melted in marches on the longest summer's days, been frozen in the trenches on the coldest winter nights, and thawed by red-hot shot in the morning; but may my next charge burst the barrel of my best fusée, and my sharp-

est flint fail me, if ever I met such a reception as this!—"How d'ye do, Mrs. Prudence?"—"I'm just going away to the milliner's."—I wrote word I should not come for six weeks, and foolishly supposed that my unexpected appearance would make 'em all wild with joy; and instead of that, one tells me he's going to obey my commands, another asks me how my face does, and a third tells me she's going away to the milliner's.

Enter THOMAS.

Now, sir, where the devil are you going?

Tho. Lawyer Brief, sir.

[*Exit.*

Col. T. The devil fly away with lawyer Brief!—I hate the whole corps.

Enter BRIEF.

What's the nature of your expedition here? Why did you beat a march into my quarters at this unseasonable hour? D'ye come to spring a mine upon me?

Brief. Nay, sir, if you choose to summon me at this late hour.

Col. T. I summon you?

Brief. If necessary, sir, I'll take my oath that I was enjoying a short vacation after the labours of the day, had got my head in a nightcap, my foot on a comfortable, my eye on a bill of costs, and my fore-finger on a passage in the statute-book, 32 Geo. III. cap. 51; which says—

Col. T. Cap. 51!—damme, I'm—Harkye, sir, put your head into your hat, your left foot on the threshold, and your right eye on the road home, you corporal in the devil's own, or, damme, but I'll send you to join Coke, Lyttleton, and all the awkward squad of blundering big-wigs that ever went before 'em.—Troop!

[*Exit Brief.*

Enter WILLIAM.

Well, sir, what do you want?

Will. Your post-horses will be ready in half an hour.
sir.

[*Exit.*

Col. T. Post-horses! what does the fellow mean by post-horses? Am I to be turned out of my house the moment I arrive?

Enter ROBERT.

Rob. Moses Abrams is gone to bed, sir; but says you may depend on his giving you a receipt in full in the morning.

Col. T. I'll give you a receipt in full this evening, you rascal, if you don't get out of my sight. [*Exit Robert*] What next, I wonder? I've discovered some more of my nephew's tricks; he has been borrowing money of old Grub; but I'll stop that business in future; I'll send and make old Grub come to me directly.

Enter JOHN.

John. Mr. Grub's compliments, sir, and he says he'll see you damned first. [*Exit.*]

Col. T. See me damned first! Powder and palisadoes! what does all this mean? My nephew has been thwarting me in my views about my daughter, and trying to shoot the husband I intend for her: but I'll settle his affairs the moment I see him. If he circumvents my plans, I shall run distracted.

Enter HARRY.

Harry. Run distracted! That be all along wi' his poor toothach. [*Aside*] Don't run distracted, sir; for he be come.

Col. T. Come, is he? Show him in. I'll keep nothing on my mind. I'll have it out directly.

Harry. He says, sir, it will give you a mortal deal of pain.

Col. T. Give me a mortal deal of pain?

Harry. Yes; and he knows your worship will roar like an old buffalo.

Col. T. Me roar like an old buffalo?

Harry. Yes; but he bid me not tell your worship, for fear you should change your mind, and not have it out.

Col. T. But I will have it out; and not one sixpence shall he get of me, were I to die to-morrow.

Harry. I hope, sir, there be no fear of that; but he won't do it for nothing; for he says he's sure it be deeply rooted, and he feared he mun ha' two or three tugs at you.

Col. T. Two or three tugs at me.

Harry. Yes; but he will do the job, though he crack your old jaw-bone.

Col. T. He crack my old jaw-bone! Damme, I'll crack his. Show him in.

Harry. Yes, sir: he's only getting some warm water from the housekeeper.

Col. T. Warm water!

Harry. Yes, and some brandy to wash your honour's mouth, when it's all over.

Enter SNAGGS, with a Bason, a Glass of Brandy, and a Case of Instruments.

Snaggs. If you're afraid, take a little drop; it be disagreeable at first; but there's no cure like it, so let's hav'n out; only sit you down, and if ever he gives you the least bit of trouble again, why blame me, that's all.

Col. T. What?

Snaggs. Sit down, sir, and Harry shall hold your poor head.

Col. T. Who the devil are you? What do you come for?

Snaggs. I come for three and sixpence at your own house, or if your honour come to me, you may have all pulled right out, at a shilling a head.

Col. T. What d'ye mean, scoundrel?

Snaggs. I don't mean to be a scoundrel. I be Mr. Snaggs, dentist, 'prentice and predecessor to old Tug; and if you will but sit down quietly, I'll draw every tooth in your head, with all the pleasure in life.

Col. T. You will, will you? Get out of my house, you damn'd impudent—And you too, rascal. [*To Harry*] I'll teach you to play tricks. [*Colonel Touchwood forces Snaggs into the Chair, who struggles, and*

at length gets away] And now if old devildom doesn't explain all this, I'll send her packing after the rest of the ragamuffins: I shall find who's to blame, I warrant; and when I do—Hark ye, sir, go you to my neighbour Strongthong, the saddler, and bid him send me the best horsewhip he has in the house; and then woe be to the fellow that has earned a right to hance it. Draw my teeth! damme, if I don't have the fellow drawn through a horsepond. *[Exit, driving off Harry.*

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. *Another Apartment.*

Enter MAJOR TOUCHWOOD and CLARISSA.

Cla. My dear brother, do hide somewhere till my uncle is gone to bed; for if you should meet, gunpowder would be nothing to the explosion we might look for.

Maj. T. Well then, I will: but stay, here comes that fool Mordaunt, he may perhaps advise me.

Cla. It's the part of a wise man, to be sure, to ask advice of a fool. Now do, pray do, hide in that closet.

Enter MORDAUNT.

Mor. Ah, well; what here you are yet? Ah, ah, my dear miss Clarissa, my friend here looks so like your uncle, that——

Cla. Like him! why, 'tis him.

Mor. O no! I'm in the secret; but I won't blab.

Maj. T. Mordaunt, if you do betray me, I'll cut your throat.

Mor. The devil you will. These are hard words, damn'd hard words indeed.

[Clarissa beckons the Major to go into the Closet, and leads Mordaunt forward.]

Cla. You silly man, don't you know that he is only in joke? *[Major Touchwood shuts himself in the Closet.]*

Enter COLONEL TOUCHWOOD, who takes the exact place where the MAJOR stood.

Col. T. Here are two more devil's imps hatching mischief, I dare say. *[Aside.]*

Mor. I tell you I won't put up with it. He said he'd cut my throat.

Col. T. Who did?

Mor. You did.

Col. T. May I be rammed into a mortar, and blown out of the touch-hole, if ever I said any such thing.

Mor. You did. You needn't disguise your voice, nor yourself either, any longer; your colonel's not dead.

Col. T. My colonel? what colonel? and how d'ye mean disguised?

Mor. Disguised! why, I thought a little while ago you looked him very well, but on reconsideration, you've rather overdone it.

Col. T. Overdone what?

Mor. You've stuffed yourself out, and screwed up your nose too much. Colonel Touchwood is ugly enough of all conscience, but he's not such a damned scarecrow as you've made him neither.

Col. T. Clary, my dear, what is that gentleman's name? I think it's Mordaunt, isn't it?

Cla. Mr. William Mordaunt.

Mor. Esquire, at your service.

Col. T. Then, Mr. William Mordaunt, esquire, at my service, if you don't instantly get out of my house, may a twenty-four pounder crumble me to atoms, if I don't make crows meat of you.

Mor. Ah, that's rather better; the colonel is a ferocious beast.

Col. T. I a ferocious beast?

Mor. But I think still it's overacted; so keep quiet, and hold your tongue, or curse me if I don't go and tell your uncle every syllable I know immediately.

[Exit; Colonel runs after him, but is stopped by Clarissa.]

Cla. Don't now, pray, my dear sir; he isn't worth your notice; he's such a fool, you know. Ha, ha, ha.

Col. T. A fool! Damme! there's an epidemic disorder in the house; they've all got it one after another. Here comes your governess, we shall see whether she's touch'd or no.

Enter MRS. PRUDENCE.

Prudence, my good soul, come hither. Are you aware what quarter the moon is in? Can you guess what tarantula has been biting my household?

Mrs. P. Ah, that plaguy toothach has driven you out of your senses; but it was just the same with an old uncle of mine by the mother's side——

Col. T. The devil fly away with your old uncle.

Mrs. P. Colonel Touchwood you horrify me! your ill breeding is beyond bearing, and I'll thank you to provide yourself with a less polished and susceptible housekeeper, who can condescend to put up with your unmannerly tantarums. *[Exit.]*

Col. T. Get out of the house, you old devil, go!

Cla. Dear uncle, the more questions you ask, it seems the more you get bewildered. It must be some joke; leave it to me, and I'll sift it to the bottom directly. *[Exit.]*

Col. T. No, no! I'll go and—— *[Sharp sings without]* Oh, here comes more of it; by the Lord, I think it gets very comical.

Enter SHARP, tipsy.

Sharp. Tol, lol, de rol! 'Egad, this house would make an excellent inn; such a larder, such big beer, small chickens, old wine, and young chambermaids.—

Ah, there's my master! he told me to make free, and he little thinks how well I've obeyed his orders. Ah, sir! all goes on well: we've done the old one, I dare say, eh! Haven't we, sir?

[*Making significant Signs to the Colonel.*]

Col. T. Why, this rascal is my nephew's man! I shall now find out the reason of all this mystery.

Sharp. The play proceeds I hope to your satisfaction. Whereabouts are we? How far have we got?

Col. T. To where a drunken impertinent puppy of a servant deserves a horse-whipping.

Sharp. Bravo, sir! that is so like that comical dog, the colonel.

Col. T. How drunk he is! but I'll humour him, and now I shall find all out.

Sharp. To-morrow you'll make your appearance as the lover. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Col. T. What the devil are you laughing at?

Sharp. To think how wise your worthy uncle will look, when he finds you married to his daughter.

Col. T. Oh, very wise.

Sharp. And when you touch the fortune, don't forget that I advised all this plan. Then such a fine fortune, and fine girl for a wife! I see it delights you. Ah! how wicked you do look.

Col. T. Do I?

Sharp. The colonel to a hair; only mention a pretty girl, and he's touched directly; he never hears a pretty girl mentioned, but he's all over——

Col. T. So I am—I am—your most abominable powder monkey.

Sharp. You are! I know what you mean—you're a chip of the old block. Well, you'll whisk the lady to Grotna-green, put up at the best inn in the place, order the best supper, the blacksmith will be parson, I'll be clerk, witness, and bell-ringer, and, besides that, I'll dance at the wedding.

Col. T. You mean to dance?

Sharp. To be sure.

Col. T. You know how, I suppose?

Sharp. Yes, I think I do.

Col. T. Because if you'll only stop here two minutes, I think I can teach you a new step. I'll just fetch the horsewhip I sent Harry for; [*Aside*] and, harkye, sirrah, do you know me?

[*Sharp, during the following Speech, approaches the Colonel gradually, till he discovers him.*]

Sharp. Why, I think I ought, sir—I think—I could tell that face through any disguise—that frown so like your uncle's—that—eh! Why, bless me, it isn't you, as I hope to live! it's your uncle; and if he comes to know it, there's an end of every thing in the shape of success, for ever and ever.

Col. T. You drunken ragamuffin! you waste-butt! drainer of bottles, glasses, and pewter-measures! Stand steady, you villain, stand steady, as you hope to be forgiven; don't dare to quit this spot a moment till my return, and then I'll——Only have a moment's patience, and you shall receive a substantial reward for all your services to my nephew, and the favours you intended to bestow on me. I'll just fetch something to make you remember me. [*Exit.*]

Sharp. A reward, shall I? I'm done up! this comes of getting drunk. No, it does not; it comes of getting sober; for if I had but ha' staid and taken another glass, it would never have happened. I'd better make it up with the old gentleman though, if it's only to get another opportunity of playing him a trick. [*Major Touchwood, during the above, comes from the Closet, down on the same side of Sharp as that on which the Colonel stood. Sharp on turning perceives him*] Bless me! he's soon come back! My dear, good sir! [*Falls down on his Knees*] only forgive me, and I'll tell you all.

Maj. T. All what? I think you've played your part famously.

Sharp. Indeed! why is it possible? am I talking to you, sir? [*Rises.*]

Maj. T. Why, who else do you suppose me?

Sharp. Lord, sir, I'm so glad; I must have been in

a dream. Well, it's no wonder, after taking the uncle for the nephew, that I should mistake the nephew for the uncle. He's arrived, sir.

Maj. T. I know it.

Sharp. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! why I thought it was you; and on this very spot, my heart o'erflowing with wine, and willingness to do you service, I'm afraid I said more than sober discretion [*Hiccups*] will justify.

Maj. T. I heard you, booby, and thought your drunkenness counterfeited.

Sharp. Yes; I unfortunately let out your honour's plot.

Maj. T. And unless you find means to let out my honour's self, I'll break every bone in your drunken body.

Sharp. This way the door is. Hush! who have we here? Button your wig, sir, and pull your coat over your face. Oh, Lord! it's a dead man, as I'm alive! he's coming up the walk.

Maj. T. By heavens, 'tis my rival Clifford, recovered of his wounds, and come to take my Sophia! that he never shall. Where are you going, sirrah?

Sharp. I am going to the butler's pantry; I want something to keep out the cold. A thought strikes me, sir: colonel Clifford must have some carriage, or chaise, or horses; and what brought him may help to take us back. [*Colonel Touchwood speaks without*] Bless us, there's the old gentleman again!

Maj. T. And Clifford is joined by three strange looking men! they approach—stand aside. Sharp, we had better reconnoitre. [*They enter the Closet,*

Enter COLONEL CLIFFORD, with two Bow Street Officers, and a Postboy.

Col. C. Observe you are to treat the young gentleman with all due respect; only get him into the chaise, and take him to town with all possible expedition. He'll not deny his being the person who kill'd me; or if he should——

1 Off. We'll swear it.

Post. And I can swear to him and his servant too, your honour, for all his wig.

2 Off. But your honour don't mean to hang the young gentleman?

Col. C. 'Tis only a frolic, I tell you. He left me, as he thought, dangerously wounded, and came down here disguised as his uncle, who is away, to carry off a lady we both wish to marry; I pretended to be worse than I was, that he might not expect me to follow him. All fair in love, you know.

1 Off. O yes, all fair in love. [Gruffly.]

Col. C. You must say I'm dead. He'll go quietly with you. When I'm married all will be made up: or, if not, and we should meet again——

2 Off. Perhaps we may have the pleasure of taking your honour in custody for killing him; for we know that you gentlemen are always obliged to do the genteel thing by one another.

Col. C. He's coming yonder; I mustn't be seen, because I'm dead, you know: I'll step in here.

[Goes to the Closet, which Sharp (after having listened) shuts at his approach.]

The door is fastened; I must hide in the garden. Remember that he'll insist on it, that he is his own uncle.

[Exit.]

1 Off. He mustn't expect us to believe that though. Is this he? [Looks out.]

Post. This is he as I brought down, I'll swear it; there only wants his man to make all sure.

[They retire.]

Re-enter COLONEL TOUCHWOOD, with a Whip in his Hand; goes forward cautiously to where he expects to find SHARP, who opens the Door, and is seen at intervals during the following.

Col. T. Eh! Oh, the rascal's gone. I know now what has bewitch'd the family—the rogues have played their last trick.

[Officers and Postboy come forward, and surround him.]

1 *Off.* So have you, sir; you must go with us.

Col. T. Go with you? why?

2 *Off.* Because your name's Touchwood.

Col. T. Rather an odd reason, why an honest gentleman should go with one who looks so much like a rogue.

1 *Off.* Civil words, if you please, sir.

Col. T. Civil words! Hear me, you vagabonds! before I raise the house, and get you all decently lodged in the coolest corner of my deepest horsepond; tell me the meaning of this daring insolence?

2 *Off.* You left your regiment without permission.

Col. T. Permission! Damme, I'm commanding officer.

1 *Off.* Kill'd a very honest gentleman in a duel.

Col. T. They mean that thief my nephew. [*Aside.*]

2 *Off.* Came down here in that ugly wig, to pass for your honoured uncle.

Col. T. What do you mean by an ugly wig, you villain?

Post. And gave me but five shillings for the last stage, though I drove like a devil.

Sharp. Now then it's my cue. [*Comes forward*] Why you little lying son of a——I beg ten thousand pardons, sir; but I gave him a dollar and an eighteen-penny piece, because you ordered me to be liberal, and travel with a silver spur.

Col. T. You did! Oh, I remember, I promised you something, and bade you stay here till I fetched it.—Harry has not brought the horsewhip yet. [*Aside.*]

Sharp. To be sure you did, sir.—And what would these worthy gentlemen have?

Col. T. Have! they have the impudence to say that I am my own nephew.

Sharp. And I dare say they'll have the impudence to say I am your own man.

Post. To be sure you are; and your master and you laughed all the way, and said how you should trick the old one.

Sharp. So we did, sore enough! Ha, ha, ha!

Col. T. Fire and furies!

Sharp. Nay, sir, you know I cautioned you on the road about talking so loud: the man overheard all, you find; and as our project's ruined, we may as well own it at once.

1 Off. Ay, ay, it's plain enough; the chaise waits; bring him along.

Col. T. Murder! fire! thieves!

[The two Officers hold him; Sharp stops his Mouth.]

Sharp. *[During the above]* Hush, sir, for heaven's sake! you'll raise the house. Your uncle is arrived, and *[Beckons Major Touchwood, who appears from the Closet-door]* I declare here he is!

[Major Touchwood marches from the Closet, boldly flourishing his Cane, and takes an Attitude opposite Colonel Touchwood, who is scarcely withheld by the Officers and Postboy from flying at his Nephew.]

Col. T. Let me come at him.

Maj. T. Poor young man! Don't let him go.

[In an assumed gruff Voice.]

Sharp. Would you hurt your honoured uncle?

Col. T. Fire! thieves! murder!

1 Off. What an undutiful nephew! Nothing but his youth can excuse it. Oh, then, you know, if that's the case. *[They force him off.]*

Maj. T. Don't hurt the young gentleman. And now to be even with my friend Clifford, for his intended favour.

Enter HARRY, with a new Horsewhip.

Harry. I have brought the horsewhip you ordered, sir; and Mr. Strongthong says, he wouldn't be the man that affronts your honour, while you've that in your hand, not for all the world.

Maj. T. The horsewhip that I ordered.

Harry. Yes, sir; you know you sent me in a great hurry to—

Maj. T. Oh, ay! true, I remember, and a pretty time you've been gone. *[Cracks the Whip.]*

Harry. Why I'm sure I ran.

Maj. T. I'll make you run. [*Cracks his Whip; Harry runs off*] Ha, ha, ha! They'll be sure to take me for my uncle if I knock 'em about a bit 'Egad, I don't know whether it would not be as well to horsewhip 'em all round.

[*Goes up cracking the Whip; and strikes Colonel Clifford as he enters.*]

I beg your pardon, sir, I didn't intend that favour for you.

Col. C. No, nor did I expect it. A pretty reception!

Maj. T. Any commands with me, sir?

[*In a short military Tone.*]

Col. C. Don't you know your friend Clifford, sir? You have already been informed by letter, that I think your daughter Sophia a most delightful young lady, and would feel happy in the honour of your alliance.

Maj. T. To the right about, colonel.—Sophia is engaged.

Col. C. To whom, sir?

Maj. T. To a very worthy young man, one major Touchwood.

Col. C. Your nephew, sir?

Maj. T. Who is, I understand, under some extraordinary obligations to you.

Col. C. In that respect I think we are pretty even. He quarrelled with me for mere similarity of taste—would have shot me through the head; and did through the shoulder—but not conceiving his better fortune in the field entitled him to the hand of the lady, I have followed him down here, and by a fair ruse d'amour sent him off to London, in the same chaise which brought him here.

Maj. T. No, have you?

Col. C. Yes, I have. I thought you'd like it. He began the scheme—but, what a fool is that man who baits a trap for another, and falls into it himself.

Maj. T. So you've sent him off?

Col. C. I have, I tell you.

Maj. T. Not you indeed, sir.

Col. C. Nay, sir, you may inquire.

Maj. T. I shall not inquire, sir—being perfectly convinced there is not a syllable of truth in any one tittle of what you have advanced.

Col. C. Would to heaven you could do me one favour.

Maj. T. Name it.

Col. C. Divest yourself of that venerable appearance.

Maj. T. Any thing to oblige you. [*Pulls off his Wig*] I owe you a kindness for getting the old gentleman out of the way, and leaving a clear field for your luckier rival.

Col. C. Major Touchwood! Astonishment! Was it indeed your uncle then, who—

Maj. T. It was, it was. You'll forgive my mirth, colonel Clifford, but—ha, ha, ha, ha! What a fool is that man who baits a trap for another, and has the good luck to fall into it himself.

Col. C. A fool indeed! To your uncle I shall apologize: for you, sir—defend yourself. [*Draws.*]

Maj. T. Ob, dear sir, with all my heart. [*They fight.*]

Re-enter CLARISSA, with SOPHIA, who interpose. SOPHIA runs to MAJOR TOUCHWOOD, CLARISSA to COLONEL CLIFFORD, who are on opposite Sides.

Soph. My dear, dear major, for heaven's sake—

Cla. My dear Clifford, would you a second time raise your arm against the brother of her you profess to love?

Col. C. Your brother! my dear Sophia?

Maj. T. Can my sister be the girl he calls Sophia? Colonel Clifford, I begin to see cause to apologize. In speaking of your Sophia, you meant—

Col. C. This lady, sir.

Soph. When we first saw that gentleman at Brighton, by an accident in conversation, he mistook our Christian names—

Cla. We thoughtlessly humoured the mistake; the colonel proposed, by letter, to my uncle, for Sophia instead of me.

Maj. T. And hence arose our first quarrel. You see, ladies, what mischief you have caused.

Col. T. [*Without*] Where are they? I'll teach the mutineers to——

Cla. O heavens! Let's get out of his way.

Maj. T. No, stay, stay. Having cleared up our own differences, we must accommodate matters with my uncle.

Col. C. But how?

Maj. T. I must pretend to quarrel with you; he who can't bear to see any body in a passion but himself, will forgive your tricks out of opposition to me: then for my share in the plot, we have only to——but he comes, follow my exaple.

[*Colonel Clifford and Major Touchwood pretend to fight. The Women scream.*]

Re-enter COLONEL TOUCHWOOD, driving SHARP on before him, and followed by MORDAUNT. He runs between the pretended Combatants, picks up his Wig, and throws it at one, while he knocks down the Sword of the other with his Cane. MORDAUNT runs to the young Ladies.

Col. T. Hear me, ye dæmons of discord, or I'll finish your work by setting fire to the house. What's the meaning of this? I came home from a wildgoose-chase of one colonel——rot his name, who proposes for my daughter and breaks his appointment; I find my family all run raving mad, coolly ask the reason; when I am popp'd into a postchaise by two police puppies; have the great good luck to get overturned into one of my own ditches; escape with whole bones to find my house full of fighting coxcombs, screaming women, and impudent valets, who perhaps will hardly condescend to answer my question, when I civilly inquire, what the devil do you all mean to do next?

Col. C. Your nephew, the major, sir, will perhaps explain.

Maj. T. Your friend, sir, there, the colonel——colonel Rot-his-name, I think you just called him, was the person by whose orders you were so disgracefully cram'm'd

into that infernal postchaise; in addition to which, he refuses to marry your daughter Sophia. I, respecting your honour as my own, drew my sword in vindication of your just rights.

Col. T. And pray, sir, how dare you vindicate my honour without my permission?

Maj. T. Sir, while I have the honour to wear this coat——

Col. T. And how came you by that coat, sir? Where was your honour when you made free with my property?

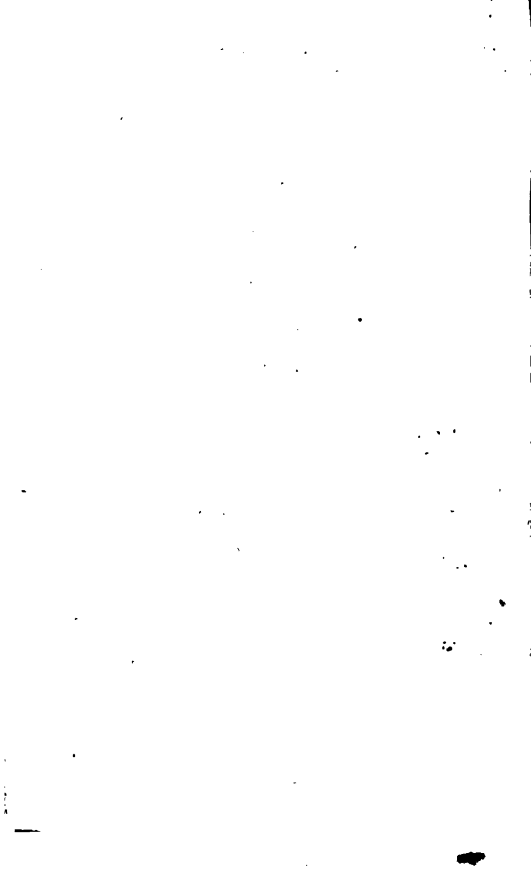
Maj. T. In short, sir, while the colonel proposed for your daughter, he paid his addresses to my sister, so that if you choose to be so easily satisfied, I am not.

Col. C. Hold, sir! the ladies' fortunes are equal; give me Clarissa, and her dowry may go with your daughter to my friend the major.

Col. T. So I'm to treat Clary ill because her lover and her brother are a couple of hot-headed fools. I've a great mind to call ye both out. But I find ye all to be such a set of madmen and madcaps, that I shall bind ye over to keep the peace; yourselves in two wedding-rings, your wives in proper marriage securities, and——

Soph. What next, papa?

Col. T. Why your children to be sure, hussy. And if any friends here, yet untired of the tricks we have played to-night, should with a view to-morrow condescend to ask "*What's Next?*" we respectfully beg leave to answer, by repeating the question.



WHICH IS THE MAN?

A Comedy.

BY MRS. COWLEY.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,

BY C. WHITTINGHAM;

**FOR WHITTINGHAM AND ARLISS, PATERNOSTER
ROW, LONDON.**

1816.



WHICH IS THE MAN?

THIS comedy was first acted at Covent Garden Theatre in 1782: it was as successful as the authoress could possibly have wished; but has not been very frequently performed since its first run. It is no small reproach to a great part of the public, that while they call loudly for what is quaintly styled, "the legitimate drama," they scarcely ever permit any of our old sterling comedies to appear without a "beggarly account of empty boxes;" were it otherwise, the inclination of managers to bring forward good stock pieces would also be coupled with their interests.



PROLOGUE *.

Spoken by Mr. Lee Lewes, dressed as an Officer.

CALL'D forth Thalia's standard to display,
And here maintain her sov'reign comic sway,
As chief—I'll reconnoitre well the ground,
To learn what hostile lines are drawn around!

[Surveys the House with a Glass.

That's not a dark defile in yonder glade;
For should it prove a treach'rons ambuscade,
No puffing miners have I here in pay,
To sap their works, or turn their covert way;
No mercenary band who have been wont
To hack and hew like pioneers, in front!

With flying shells our engineers shall try
That well-mann'd battlement which tow'rs so high!

[Pointing to the Upper Gallery.

Beneath, our point blank shot will surely reach,
And in yon half-moon'd battery make a breach.

[To the Second Gallery.

These lovely breast-works that adorn the field,
To nature's gentle summons soon must yield!

[Side Boxes, &c.

This advanc'd post the picket-guard to keep,
And that reserve, who are entrench'd chin deep,
We hope to carry by a bold exertion,
At least amuse with some well-plann'd diversion!

[To the Pit.

My troops are vet'rans; it has been their lot,
To form in front of service hissing-hot;
Who, when their ranks are gall'd or put to flight,
Are sure to rally and renew the fight,
Unless—and then no light dragoons scour fleet,
Their powder fails for want of true saltpetre!

Our plan's avow'd; it is from this firm station,
To gain the heights of public approbation!

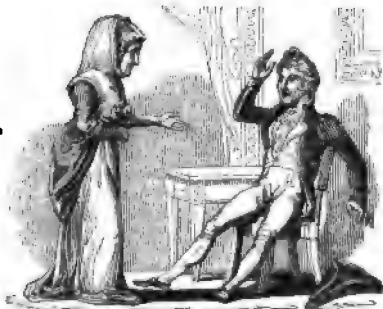
* It having been reported that this comedy was written by a military character, a gentleman of acknowledged genius favoured the author with the above.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally acted.

<i>Lord Sparkle</i>	<i>Mr. Lee Lowes.</i>
<i>Fitzherbert</i>	<i>Mr. Henderson.</i>
<i>Beauchamp</i>	<i>Mr. Lewis.</i>
<i>Belville</i>	<i>Mr. Wroughton.</i>
<i>Pendragon</i>	<i>Mr. Quick.</i>
<i>Gentlemen</i>	{ <i>Mr. Booth,</i> <i>Mr. Robson, &c.</i>
<i>Lady Bell Bloomer</i>	<i>Miss Younge.</i>
<i>Julia</i>	<i>Miss Satchell.</i>
<i>Sophy Pendragon</i>	<i>Mrs. Mattocks.</i>
<i>Clarinda</i>	<i>Mrs. Morton.</i>
<i>Kitty</i>	<i>Mrs. Wilson.</i>
<i>Tiffany</i>	<i>Mrs. Davenett.</i>
<i>Mrs Johnson</i>	<i>Miss Platt.</i>
<i>Ladies.</i>	{ <i>Miss Stewart,</i> <i>Mrs. Poussin, &c.</i>
<i>Servants to Lord Sparkle, Belville, Lady Bell, &c.</i>	

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *A Drawing-room.*

Enter MRS. JOHNSON, crossing the Stage, a Boy following.

Mrs. J. **H**ERE, Betty, Dick! where are ye? Don't you see my lord Sparkle's carriage? I shall have my lodgers disturbed with their thundering. What in the name of wonder can bring him here at this time in the morning? Here he comes, looking like a rake as he is.

Enter LORD SPARKLE, yawning.

Lord S. Bid 'em turn; I shan't stay a moment. So, Mrs. Johnson, I pull'd the string just to see how your silvans go on.

Mrs. J. As usual, my lord; but, bless me! how early your lordship is.

Lord S. How late, you mean. I have not been in bed since yesterday at one. I am going home now to rest for an hour or two, and then to the drawing-room. But what are the two rustics about? I have not been plagued with them these three or four days.

Mrs. J. They are now out.

Lord S. I supposed that, or I should not have called. But pr'ythee do they talk of returning to their native woods again?

Mrs. J. Oh no, sir! the young gentleman seems to have very different ideas: miss too has great spirits, though she seems now and then at a loss what to do with herself.

Lord S. Do with herself! Why don't you persuade her to go back to Cornwall? You should tell 'em what a vile place London is, full of snares, and debaucheries, and witchcrafts. You don't preach to 'em, Johnson.

Mrs. J. Indeed I do, my lord; and their constant answer is, "Oh, lord Sparkle is our friend. Lord Sparkle would take it amiss if we should go; 'twould look like distrusting his lordship."

Lord S. Was ever man so hampered? Two fools! to mistake common forms and civilities for attachments.

Mrs. J. I fear, my lord, towards the young lady something more than forms——

Lord S. Never, upon my honour! I kissed her; so I did all the women in the parish; the septennial ceremony. The brother I used to drink vile port with, listen to his village stories, call his vulgarity wit, and his impudence spirit; was not that fatigue and mortification enough, but I must be bored with 'em here in town?

Mrs. J. But miss, sir, talks of pressing invitations and letters, and——

Lord S. Things of course; they had influence, and got me the borough: I, in return, said she was the most charming girl in the world; that I adored her; and some few things that every body says on such occasions, and nobody thinks of.

Mrs. J. But it appears that miss did think——

Lord S. Yes, faith; and on my writing a civil note that I should be happy to see them in town, et cætera, they took me at my word; and before I thought the letter had reached 'em, they were in my house, all joy and congratulation. I didn't choose to be encumbered

with 'em, so placed 'em with you. The boy was at first amusing; but our circles have had him, and I must be rid of him.

Mrs. J. I must say, I wish I was quit of them at present; for my constant lodger, Mr. Belville, came to town last night, and he wants this drawing-room to himself; he's obliged to share it now with Mr. Pendragon and his sister.

Lord S. Hey! Belville! 'Gad, that's lucky! there is not a fellow in town better received by the women. Throw the girl in his way, and get quit of her at once.

Mrs. J. If you mean dishonestly, my lord, you have mistaken your person: I did not live so many years with your mother to be capable of such a thing. Ah, my lord, if my lady were living——

Lord S. She would scold to little purpose; and you may spare yourself the trouble. I tell you I care nothing about the girl; I merely want to get rid of her, and you must assist me. [*Mrs. Johnson turns from him with disgust*] Hey-day! the nicety of your ladyship's honour is piqued! Ha, ha, ha! the mistress of a lodging-house! Bien drole; ha, ha, ha! [*Exit Mrs. Johnson*] But who is this hobbling up stairs? Ha! old Cato the censor, my honourable cousin! What the devil shall I do? No avoiding him, however.

Enter FITZHERBERT.

I wish I had been out of the house, Fitzherbert, before you appeared; I know I shall not escape without some abuse.

Fitz. I never throw away reproof, where there are no hopes of amendment—your lordship is safe.

Lord S. Am I to take that for wit?

Fitz. No; for then I fear you would not understand it.

Lord S. I want you to teach me some of that happy ease which you possess in your rudeness; 'twould be to me an acquisition. I am eternally getting into the most horrid scrapes, merely by politeness and good breeding. Here are two persons now in this house, for instance——

Fitz. Who do not know that the language of what you call politeness, differs from that of truth and ho-

nour. You see I know those to whom you allude. But we only lose time. Good day, my lord.

Lord S. Lose time! ha, ha, ha! Why, of what value can time be to you? the greatest enemy you have; adding every day to your wrinkles and ill humour. I'll prove to you now, that I have employed the last twelve hours to better purpose than you have. Nine of them you slept away; the last three you have been running about town, snarling, and making people uneasy with themselves: whilst I have been sitting peaceably at Weltjie's, where I have won—guess what?

Fitz. Half as much as you lost yesterday; a thousand or two guineas perhaps.

Lord S. Guineas! Pho, you are jesting! Guineas are as scarce with us as in the coffers of the congress. Like them we stake with counters, and play for solid earth.

Fitz. Well!

[*Impatiently.*]

Lord S. Bullion is a mercantile kind of wealth, passing through the hands of dry-salters, vinegar-merchants, and lord-mayors. Our goddess holds a cornucopia instead of a purse, from which she pours corn-fields, fruitful valleys, and rich herds. This morning she popp'd into my dice-box a snug villa, five hundred acres, arable and pasture, with the next presentation to the living of Guzzleton.

Fitz. A church-living in a dice-box! Well, well, I suppose it will be bestowed as worthily as it was gained! Good day, my lord; good day. [Turns from him.]

Lord S. Good night, Crabtree; good night!

Enter a Servant.

Tell Belville I called to congratulate his escape from the stupid country. [Going.]

Fitz. My lord!

Lord S. Sir!

Fitz. I am going this morning to visit lady Bell Bloomer. I give you this intimation, that we may not risk another rencontre.

Lord S. Civilly designed; and for the same polite reason I inform you, that I shall be there in the evening.

[Exit.]

Fitz. Your master in bed yet; what time was he in town yesterday?

Serv. Late, sir. We should have been earlier, but we met with sir Harry Hairbrain on the road, with his new fox-hounds; fell in with the hunt at Bagshot, broke cover, run the first burst across the heath towards Datchet; she then took right an end for Egham, sunk the wind upon us as far as Stains, where Reynard took the road to Oxford, and we the route to town, sir. [*Bows.*]

Fitz. Very geographical indeed, sir. Now, pray inform your master—Oh, here we come!

Enter BELVILLE, in a Robe de chambre.

Just risen from your pillow! Are you not ashamed of this? A fox-hunter, and in bed at eleven!

Bel. My dear, morose, charming, quarrelsome old friend, I am ever in character! In the country I defy fatigue and hardship. Up before the lazy slut, Aurora, has put on her pink-coloured gown to captivate the plough-boys, scamper over hedge and ditch; dead with hunger, alight at a cottage, drink milk from the hands of a brown wench, and eat from a wooden platter. In town I am a fine gentleman; have my clothes au dernier gout; dine on made dishes; drink burgundy; and, in a word, am every where the ton.

Fitz. So much the worse, so much the worse, young man! to be the ton where vice and folly are the ruling deities, prove that you must be sometimes a fool, at others a——

Bel. Pshaw! you satirists, like moles, shut your eyes to the light, and grope about for the dark side of the human character: there is a great deal of good sense and good meaning in the world. As for its follies, I think folly a mighty pleasant thing; at least to play the fool gracefully, requires more talents than would set up a dozen cynics.

Fitz. Then half the people I know must have wonderful talents, for they have been playing the fool from sixteen to sixty. Apropos! I found my precious kinsman, lord Sparkle, here.

Bel. Ay, there's an instance of the happy effects of total indifference to the sage maxims you recommend.

Fitz. Happy effects do you call them?

Bel. Most triumphant! Who so much admired? who so much the fashion? the general favourite of the ladies, and the common object of imitation with the men! Is not lord Sparkle the happy man who's to carry the rich and charming widow, lady Bell Bloomer; from so many rivals?—And will not you, after quarrelling with him half your life, leave him a fine estate at the end of it?

Fitz. No, no!—I tell you, no! [With warmth.

Bel. Nay, his success with the widow is certain. He boasts his triumph every where; and as she is such a favourite of yours, every thing else will follow.

Fitz. No; for if she marries Sparkle, she will be no longer a favourite: yet she receives him with a degree of distinction that sometimes makes me fear it.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Beauchamp.

[Exit.

Fitz. Oh! I expected him to call on you this morning. You must obtain his confidence; it will assist me in my designs. When I found myself disappointed in my hopes of his lordship, I selected Beauchamp from the younger branches of my family: but of this he knows nothing, and thinks himself under high obligations to the patronage of the peer; an error in which I wish him to continue, as it will give me an opportunity of proving them both.—But here he comes!—This way I can avoid him.

[Exit.

Enter BEAUCHAMP.

Bel. Beauchamp!—and in regimentals!—Why, pr'ythee, George, what spirit has seized thee now? When I saw thee last, thou wert devoted to the grave profession of the law, or the church; and I expected to have seen thee enveloped in a wig, wrangling at the bar; or seated in a fat benefice, receiving tythe-pigs and poultry.

Beau. Those, Belville, were my school designs; but the fire of youth gave me ardours of a different sort.

The heroes of the areopagus and the forum have yielded to those of Marathon; and I feel that whilst my country is struggling amidst surrounding foes, I ought not to devote a life to learned indolence, that might be gloriously hazarded in her defence.

Bel. I dare swear this heroic spirit springs from the whim of some fine lady, who fancied you would be a smarter fellow in a cockade and gorget, than in a stiff band and perriwig.

Beau. If your insinuation means that my heart has not been insensible of the charms of some fair lady, you are right; but my transformation is owing to no whim of hers; for oh, Charles! she never yet condescended to make me the object of her thoughts.

Bel. Modest too! Ay, you were right to give up the law.—But who, pray, may this exalted fair one be who never condescended?

Beau. I never suffer my lips to wanton with the charming sounds that form her name. The lady has beauty, wit, and spirit; but, above all, a mind. Is it possible, Charles, to love a woman without a mind?

Bel. Has she a mind for you? That is the most important question.

Beau. I dare not feed my passion with so presumptuous a hope; yet I would not extinguish it if I could: for it is not a love that tempts me into corners to wear out my days in complaints: it prompts me to use them for the most important purposes: the ardours it gives me shall be felt in the land of our enemies: they shall know how well I love.

Bel. Pho! pho! this is the gallantry of one thousand one hundred and one; the kind of passion that animated our fathers in the fields of Cressy and Poitiers. Why, no beauty of our age, man, will be won in this style!—Now, suppose yourself at the opera. [*Looks through his Hand*] 'Gad, that's a fine girl!—Twenty thousand, you say? I think I'll have her.—Yes, she'll do. I—I must have her. I'll call on her to-morrow and tell her so. Have you spirit and courage enough for that, my Achilles?

Beau. No, truly.

Bel. Then give up all thoughts of being received.

Beau. I have no thoughts of hazarding a reception. The pride of birth, and a few hundreds for my education, were the sole patrimony the imprudence of a father left me. My relation, lord Sparkle, has procured for me a commission.—Generously to offer that, and a knapsack to a lady of five thousand a year, would be properly answered by a contemptuous dismissal.

Bel. But suppose she should take a fancy to your knapsack?

Beau. That would reduce me to the necessity of depriving myself of a happiness I would die to obtain; for never can I submit to be quartered on a wife's fortune, whilst I have a sword to carve subsistence for myself.

Bel. That may be in the great style, but 'tis scarcely in the polite. Will you take chocolate in my dressing-room?

Beau. No, I am going to take orders at my colonel's. Where shall we meet in the evening?

Bel. Faith, 'tis impossible to tell! I commit myself to chance for the remainder of the day, and shall finish it as she directs. *[Exit at opposite Sides.]*

SCENE II. *An Apartment at CLARINDA'S.*

Enter CLARINDA, reading a Catalogue, followed by TIFFANY.

Cla. Poor lady Squander! So Christie has her jewels and furniture at last!—I must go to the sale.—Mark that Dresden service, and the pearls. *[Gives the Catalogue to Tiffany]* It must be a great comfort to her to see her jewels worn by her friends.—Who was here last night? *[Sits down, and takes some Cards from the Table]* I came home so late, I forgot to inquire.—Mrs. Jessamy—Lady Racket—Miss Belvoir—Lord Sparkle—*[Starts up]* Lord Sparkle here! Oh, heavens and earth! what possessed me to go to lady Price's? I wish she, and her concert of three fiddles and a flute, had been playing to her kids on the Welsh mountains!—Why did you persuade me to go out last night?

Tif. Dear ma'am, you seemed so low-spirited, that I thought——

Cla. I missed him every where! At four places he was just gone as I came in.—But what does it signify? 'Twas lady Bell Bloomer he was seeking, I dare swear: his attachment to the relict is every where the subject. Hang those widows! I really believe there's something cabalistical in their names. No less than fourteen fine young fellows of fortune have been drawn into the matrimonial noose by them since last February.—'Tis well they were threatened with imprisonment, or we should not have had an unmarried infant above seventeen, between Charing-cross and Portman-square.

Tif. Well, I am sure I wish lady Bell was married; she's always putting you out of temper.

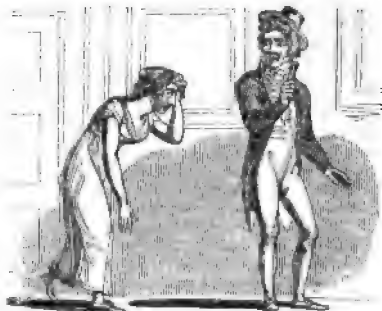
Cla. Have I not cause? Till she broke upon the town, I was at the top of fashion; you know I was.—My dress, my equipage, my furniture, and myself, were the criterions of taste; but a new French chambermaid enabled her ladyship at one stroke to turn the tide against me.

Tif. Ay, I don't know what good these mademoiselles——

Cla. But, Tiffany, she is to be at court to-day, out of mourning for the first time. I am resolved to be there.—No, I won't go neither, now I think on't.—If she should really outshine me, her triumph will be increased by my being witness to it. I won't go to St. James's: but I'll go to her rout this evening, and, if 'tis possible, prevent lord Sparkle's being particular to her. Perhaps that will put her in an ill humour, and then the advantage will be on my side. [Exit.

Tif. Meroy on us! To be a chambermaid to a miss on the brink of thirty requires as good politics as being prime minister! Now, if she should not rise from her toilette quite in looks to-day, or if the desertion of a lover or the victory of a rival should happen, ten to one but I shall be forced to resign, without even a pension to retire on. [Exit.

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I.

An elegant Apartment at LADY BELL BLOOMER'S.

Enter JULIA, with Papers in her Hand.

Julia. What an invaluable treasure! Those dear papers, that have lain within the frigid walls of a convent, insensible and uninteresting to every one around them, contain for me a world of happiness. He is in England! How little he suspects that I too am here!

Enter KITTY.

Kitty. Mr. Fitzherbert will be here immediately, ma'am.

Julia. Mr. Fitzherbert? Very well. Has lady Bell finished dressing yet?

Kitty. [*Speaks extremely fast*] No, ma'am.—Mr. Crape, the hair-dresser, has been with her these three hours, and her maid is running here and there, and Mr. John flying about to milliners and perfumers, and the new vis-a-vis at the door to carry her ladyship to court.

—Every thing black banished, and the liveries come home shining with silver; and the moment she's gone out, every body will be in such a delightful hurry about the rout that her ladyship is to give this evening, that they say all the world——

Julia. Ha, ha, ha! Pr'ythee stop. I can't wonder if lady Bell should be transported at dropping her weeds, for it seems to have turned the heads of the whole family.

Kitty. Oh! dearoo, ma'am, to be sure! for now we shall be so gay! Lady Bell has such fine spirits!—And 'tis well she has; for the servants tell me, their old master would have broke his heart else.—They all adore her.—I wish you were a little gayer, ma'am! Somehow we are so dull. 'Tis a wonder so young and so pretty a lady——

Julia. Don't run into impertinence.—I have neither the taste nor talents for public life that lady Bell Bloomer has.

Kitty. Laws, ma'am, 'tis all use! You are always at home; but lady Bell knows that wit and a fine person are not given for a fire-side at home. [*Drawls*] She shines every evening in half the houses of half-a-dozen parishes; and the next morning we have stanzas in the Bivy of Beauties, and sonnets, and billet-doux, and all the fine things that fine ladies are so fond of.

Julia. I can bear your freedoms no longer. Carry these flowers, with my compliments, and tell her ladyship I sent to Richmond for them, as I know her fondness for natural bouquets; and bid Harry deny me to every body this morning, except Mr. Fitzherbert.

[*Exit Kitty.*]

Enter FITZHERBERT.

Fitz. Happily excepted, my dear ward! but I suppose you heard my step, and threw in my name for a douceur. I can hardly believe, that when you shut your doors on youth and flattery, you would open them to a cross old man, who seldom entertains you with any thing but your faults.

Julia. How you mistake, sir! You are the greatest flatterer I have; your whole conduct flatters me with esteem and love; and as you do not squander these things—— [Smiles.

Fitz. There I must correct you. I do squander them on few objects indeed; and they are proportionably warmer. I feel attachments fifty times as strong as your good-humoured, smiling people, who are every one's humble servant, and every body's friend. Where is Lady Bell?

Julia. Yet at her toilette, I believe. My dear sir, I am every hour more grateful to you for having given me so charming a friend.

Fitz. So I would have you. When you came from France, I prevailed on her ladyship to allow you her society, that you might add to the polish of elegant manners the graces of an elegant mind.—Here she comes: her tongue and her heels keeping time.

Enter LADY BELL BLOOMER.

Ay, ay, if all the women in the world were prating young widows, love and gallantry would die away, and our men grow reasonable and discreet.

Lady B. Oh, you monster! But I am in such divine spirits, that nothing you can say can destroy them.—My sweet Julia, what a bouquet! Lady Myrtle will expire. She was so enveloped in flowers and ever-greens last night, that she looked like the picture of fair Rosamond in her bower.—My dear Fitz, do you know we dined yesterday in Hill-street, and had the fortitude to stay till eleven?

Julia. I was tired to death with the fatiguing visit.

Lady B. Now I, on the contrary, came away with fresh relish for society. The persevering civility of sir Andrew, and the mawkish insipidity of his tall daughter act like olives: you can't endure them on your palate, but they brighten the gusto of your tokay.

Fitz. Then I advise your ladyship to serve up sir Andrew and his daughter at your next entertainment.

Lady B. So I would, only one can't remove 'em with

the dessert.—But how do you like me? Don't you think I shall make a thousand conquests to-day?

Fitz. Doubtless, if you meet with so many fools.—But pray which of those you have already made will be the most flattered by all these gay insignia of your liberty?

Lady B. Probably he whom it least concerns.

Julia. Pray tell us which is that?

Lady B. Oh, heavens! to answer that requires more reflection than I have ever given the subject.

Julia. Should you build a temple to your lovers, I fancy we should find lord Sparkle's name on the altar.

Lady B. Oh! lord Sparkle!—Who can resist the gay, the elegant, the all-conquering lord Sparkle? the most distinguished feather in the plume of fashion; without that barbarous strength of mind which gives importance to virtues or to vices. Fashionable, because he's well dressed; brilliant, because he's of the first clubs, and uses his borrowed wit like his borrowed gold—as though it was his own.

Fitz. Why now, this man, whom you understand so well, you receive as though his tinsel was pure gold.

Lady B. Ay, to be sure! tinsel is just as well for show.

Fitz. But in the midst of all this sunshine for lord Sparkle, will you not throw a ray on the spirited, modest Beauchamp?

Lady B. Were I so inclined, to make it welcome, I must change my fan for a spear, my feathers for a helmet, and stand forth a Thalestris. You know his mistress is war. [*Sighs*] But why do I trifle thus?—The hour of triumph is at hand.

Fitz. Of what?

Lady B. The moment of triumph!—Anglice, the moment when, having shown myself at half the houses in St. George's, I am set down at St. James's, my fellows standing on each hand, as I descend—the whisper flying through the crowd, "Who is she? who is that sweet creature? One of the four heiresses?"—"No, she's a foreign ambassadress."—I ascend the stairs—move

slowly through the rooms—drop my fan—inconmode my bouquet—stay to adjust it, that the little gentry may have time to fix their admiration—again move on—enter the drawing-room—throw a flying glance round the circle, and see nothing but spite in the eyes of the women, and a thousand nameless things in those of the men.

Julia. The very soul of giddiness.

Lady B. The very soul of happiness!—Can I be less?—Think of a widow just emerged from her weeds for a husband to whom her father, not her heart, united her, my jointure elegant, my figure charming—deny it, if you dare!—Pleasure, fortune, youth, health, all opening their stores before me; whilst innocence and conscious honour shall be my handmaids, and guide me in safety through the dangerous ordeal.

Fitz. To your innocence and conscious honour add, if you have time, [*Archly*] a little prudence, or your sentinels may be surprised asleep, and you reduced to a disgraceful capitulation.

Lady B. Oh! I'm mistress of my whole situation, and cannot be surprised. But, heavens! I am losing a conquest every moment I stay! The loves and pleasures have prepared their rosy garlands, my triumphal car is waiting, and my proud steeds neighing to be gone!—Away to victory! [*Exit, with great spirit.*]

Fitz. A charming woman, Julia! She conceals a fine understanding under apparent giddiness; and a most sensible heart beneath an air of indifference.

Julia. Yes, I believe her ladyship's heart is more sensible than she allows to herself. I rally her on lord Sparkle, but it is Mr. Beauchamp; whose name is never mentioned but her cheeks tell such blushing truths, as she would never forgive me for observing.

Fitz. Upon my word, you seem well acquainted with your friend's heart! Will you be equally frank as to your own?

Julia. Sir!—my heart!

[*In great confusion.*]

Fitz. Yes, will you assist me in reading it?

Julia. To be sure, sir.

Fitz. Then tell me, if amongst the painted, powdered, gilded moths whom your beauty or fortune have allured, is there one whom you would honour with your hand? Ay, take time; I would not have you precipitate.

Julia. No, sir; not one. [*Hesitating.*]

Fitz. I depend on your truth, and on that assurance inform you, that a friend of mine is arrived in town, whom I mean this morning to present to you.

Julia. As a——

Fitz. As a lover, who has my warmest wishes that he may become your husband.

Julia. Do I know the person for whom you are thus interested, sir?

Fitz. You do not; but I have had long intimacy with him, and 'tis the dearest wish of my heart to see him and Julia Manners united.

Julia. I trust, sir, you will allow——

Fitz. Be under no apprehensions. Much as I'm interested in this union, your inclinations shall be attended to. I am now going to your lover, and shall introduce him to you this morning. Come, don't look so distressed, child, at the approach of that period which will give you dignity and character in society. The marriage state is that in which your sex evinces its importance; and where, in the interesting circle of domestic duties, a woman has room to exercise every virtue that constitutes the great and the amiable. [*Erit.*]

Julia. The moment I so much dreaded is arrived! How shall I reveal to my guardian, and to lady Bell, that I am married? that I have already dared to take on me those important duties? I must not reveal it—my solemn promise to my husband—but where is he? Oh! I must write to him this moment, that I may not be left defenceless to brave the storm of offended authority and love. [*Erit.*]

SCENE II. BELVILLE'S Lodgings.

Enter BELVILLE, new dressed.

Bel. Let my trunks be ready, and the chaise at the door to-morrow morning by six, for I shall dine in Dover. [*To a Servant without.*]

Enter FITZHERBERT.

Fitz. Ha! just in time, I see! You are ready plumed for flight.

Bel. True; but my flight would have been to you. Impatient to know the cause of your summoning me from the Dryads and Hamadryads of Berkshire, your letter reached me at the very instant I was setting out for Dover in my way to Paris.

Fitz. Paris!

Bel. Yes.

Fitz. Pho, pho! stay where you are, stay where you are! The great turnpike between Dover and Calais, is a road destructive to this kingdom: and I wish there were toll-gates erected on its confines, to restrain with a heavy tax the number of its travellers.

Bel. I fear the tax would be more generally felt than the benefit; for it would restrain not only the folly-mongers and the fashion-mongers, but the rational inquirer and the travelling connoisseur.

Fitz. So much the better! so much the better! Our travelling philosophers have done more towards destroying the nerves of their country, than all the politics of France. Hey-day! who's this? Oh, the Cornish lad, I suppose, whom lord Sparkle placed here.

Bel. [*Laughing*] Yes, an odd being! He was designed by nature for a clodpole; but the notice of a peer overset the little understanding he had, and so he commenced fine gentleman. He has a sister with him, who ran wild upon the commons till her father's death; but she fancies herself a wit, and satirizes Bruin. Here he comes.

Enter PENERAGON.

Pen. My dear fellow-lodger, I'm come to—Oh! your servant, sir! [*To Fitzherbert*] Is this gentleman a friend of yours?

Bel. He is.

Pen. Your hand, sir! [*Passes Belville and stands between them*] If you are Mr. Belville's friend, you are my friend, and we are all friends; I soon make acquaintance.

Fitz. A great happiness!

Pen. Yes, so it is, and very polite too. I have been in the great world almost six weeks, and I can see no difference between the great world and the little world; only that they've no ceremony; and so as that's the mark of good breeding, I tries to hit it off.

Fitz. With success.

Pen. To convince you of that, I'll tell you a devilish good thing. You must know——

Fitz. Excuse me now, but I am convinced you will amuse me, and desire your company at dinner; they'll give you my address below. Mr. Belville, I have business of importance. *[Exit with Belville.]*

Pen. 'Gad, I'm glad he asked me to visit him! He must be a lord by his want of ceremony. "Mr. Belville, I have business of importance," *[Imitates]* and off they go. Now in Cornwall we should have thought that damned rude; but 'tis easy. "Mr. Belville, I have business of importance." *[Going]* Easy, easy, easy!

Enter SOPHY PENDRAGON.

Sophy. Brother Bobby! brother Bobby!

Pen. *[Returns]* I desire, miss Pendragon, you won't brother me at this rate; making one look as if one didn't know life. How often shall I tell you, that it is the most ungentleel thing in the world for relations to brother, and father, and cousin one another, and all that sort of thing. I did not get the better of my shame for three days, when you bawled out to Mrs. Dobson, at Launceston concert, "Aunt, aunt, here's room between brother and I, if cousin Dick will sit closer to Father!"

Sophy. And where's the harm? What d'ye think one has relations given one for? To be ashamed of 'em?

Pen. I don't know what they were given us for: but I know no young man of fashion cares for his relations.

Sophy. More shame for your young men of fashion; but I assure you, brother Bobby, I shall never give in to any such unnatural, new-fangled ways. As for you, since lord Sparkle took notice of you, you are quite another thing. You used to creep into the parlour,

when father had company, hanging your head like a dead partridge; steal all round the room behind their backs to get at a chair; then sit down on one corner of it, tying knots in your handkerchief: and if any body drank your health, rise up, and scrape your foot so—"Thank you kindly, sir!"

Pen. By goles, if you——

[*Shakes his Fist.*]

Sophy. But now, when you enter the room, your hat is tossed carelessly on a table; you pass the company with a half bend of your body; fling yourself into one chair, and throw your legs on another.—"Pray, my dear sir, do me the favour to ring."—"John, bring lemonade."—"Mrs. Plume has been driving me all morning in Hyde-park against the wind, and the dust has made my throat mere plaister of Paris."

Pen. Hang me, if I don't like myself at secondhand better than I thought I should! Why, if I do it as well as you, *Sophy*, I shall soon be quite the thing! And now I'll give you a bit of advice: as 'tis very certain lord Sparkle means to introduce you to high life, 'tis fitting you should know how to behave; and as I have been amongst 'em, I can tell you.

Sophy. Well!

Pen. Why, first of all, if you should come into a drawing-room, and find twenty or thirty people in the circle, you are not to take the least notice of any one.

Sophy. No!

Pen. No! the servant will, perhaps, get you a chair; if not, slide into the nearest. The conversation will not be interrupted by your entrance; for they'll take as little notice of you as you of them.

Sophy. Pshaw!

Pen. Then, be sure to be equally indifferent to the coming in of others. I saw poor lady Carmine one night dying with confusion, for the vulgarity and ill-breeding of her friend, who actually rose from her chair, at the entrance of the dutchess of Dulcet and lady Betty Blowse.

Sophy. Be quiet, Bobby!

Pen. True, as I am a young man of fashion! Then

you must never let your discourse go beyond one word. If any body should happen to take the trouble to entertain the company, you may throw in—"Charming! Odious! Capital!"—Never mount to a phrase, unless to that dear delightful one, of "all that sort of thing."—The use made of that is wonderful! "All that sort of thing," is an apology for want of wit; it is a substitute for argument; it will serve for the point of a story, or the fate of a battle.

Sophy. Well then; upon going away!

Pen. Oh, you go away as you came in! If one has a mind to give the lady of the house a nod, [*Nodding*] one may; but 'tis still higher breeding to leave her with as little ceremony as I do you.

[*Exit without looking at her.*]

Sophy. I wish I could be sure it was the fashion not to mind forms, I'd go directly and visit lord Sparkle. I could tear my eyes out to think I was abroad to-day when he called on Mrs. Johnson! In all the books I have read, I never met with a lover so careless as he is. Sometimes I have a mind to treat him with disdain, and then I recollect all I have read about ladies' behaviour that break their lovers hearts: but he won't come near me. Now I have been three days in a complying humour; but 'tis all one, still he keeps away. I'll be hang'd, if I don't know what he's about soon! He shan't think to bring me from the Land's-end to make a fool of me. Sophy Pendragon has more spirit than he thinks for.

[*Exit.*]

Re-enter BELVILLE and FITZHERBERT.

Bel. A wife! heaven's last best gift! But—a—no—I shan't marry yet. I have a hundred little follies to act before I do so rash a thing.

Fitz. But I say, you shall marry. I have studied you from eighteen, and know your character; I have picked you out from all the blockheads and fools about you, to take a fine girl off my hands, with twenty thousand pounds.

Bel. But what is the lady? coquette, prude, or vixen?

Fitz. Treat her with confidence, tenderness, and respect, and she'll be an angel; be morose, suspicious, and neglectful, and she'll be—a woman. The wife's character and conduct is a comment on that of the husband.

Bel. Any thing more? [*Gaily.*]

Fitz. Yes, she is my ward, and the daughter of the friend of my youth. I entertain parental affection for her, and give you the highest proof of my esteem in transferring to you the care of her happiness. Refuse it if you dare.

Bel. Dare! My dear friend, I must refuse the honour you offer me.

Fitz. How?

Bel. To be serious, it is not in my power to wed the lady.

Fitz. I understand you. I am disappointed! I should have mentioned this subject to you before I had suffered it to make so strong a feature in my picture of happiness.

Bel. Would you had, that I might have informed you at once—that I am—married.

Fitz. Married! Where, when, how, with whom?

Bel. Where? In France. When? About eight months since. How? By an English clergyman. With whom? Ah, with such a one! her beauty is of the Greek kind, which pleases the mind more than the eye; yet to the eye nothing can be more lovely: to this charming creature add the name of Julia Manners, and you know my wife.

Fitz. Julia Manners! Julia Manners, did you say?

Bel. Yes, Julia Manners! I first knew her at the house of a friend in Paris, whose daughters were in the same convent with herself. I often visited her at the grate; at length, by the assistance of mademoiselle St. Val, prevailed upon her to give me her hand, but was immediately torn from her by a summons from my uncle at Florence; whence I was dispatched to England on a ministerial affair.

Fitz. So, so, so, very fine! [*Aside*] I suppose you

had the prudence to make yourself acquainted with the lady's family, before you married her?

Bel. Yes; her family and fortune are elegant. She has a guardian, whose address the sweet obstinate refused to give me, that she might herself reveal the marriage; which I had reasons, however, to request her not to do, till we both arrived in England.

Fitz. Then you have not seen your bride in England?

Bel. Oh no! my Julia is yet in her convent. I have been preparing for her reception in Berkshire, and have written to inform her, that I would meet her at Calais; but I fear my letters have missed her, and shall therefore set out for Paris, to conduct to England the woman who must give the point to all my felicities.

Fitz. And has Julia been capable of this? Ungrateful girl! is it thus she rewards my cares? [*Aside.*

Bel. Your silence and your resentment, my dear friend, whilst they flatter, distress me.

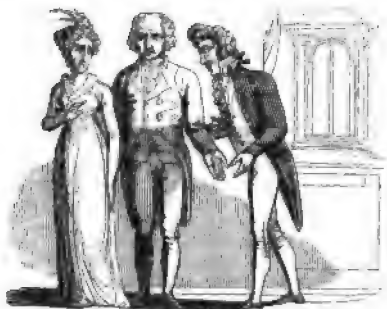
Fitz. I'm indeed offended at your marriage, but not with you; on you I had no claims. [*Going.*

Bel. If you will leave me, adieu! I am going to run over the town. My mind, impatient for the moment which carries me to my sweet bride, feels all the intermediate time a void, which any adventure may fill up.

[*Exit.*

Fitz. Spite of my displeasure, I can hardly conceal from him his happiness! Yet I will. Julia must be punished. I have not deserved this want of confidence, and must correct it. If I don't mistake, Pendragon is a fit instrument; I'll take him home with me. Yee, yes, my young lady, you shall have a lover! Oh, these headstrong girls. [*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. LORD SPARKLE'S House.

LORD SPARKLE and **BEAUCHAMP** discovered at a Table, on which are Pens, Paper, &c. **LORD SPARKLE** superbly dressed.

Lord S. Poor George! and so thou wilt really be in a few days in the bosom of the Atlantic?
Farewell to green fields and sweet groves,
Where Chloe engag'd my fond heart.

[Rises, and comes forward.

Hey for counterscarps, wounds, and victory.

Beau. I accept your last words for my omen; and now in the true spirit of Homer's heroes, should take my congé, and depart with its influence upon me.

Lord S. First take an office which I know must charm you. You admire lady Bell Bloomer?

Beau. Admire her! Yes, by heaven——

[With great warmth.

Lord S. No heroics, dear George, no heroics! they are totally out now; totally out both in love and war.

Beau. How, my lord?

Lord S. Indifference! that's the rule. We love, hate,

quarrel, and even fight, without suffering our tranquillity to be incommoded: nothing disturbs.

Beau. Disgustful apathy! What becomes of the energies of the heart in this wretched system? Does it annihilate your feelings?

Lord S. Oh no! I feel, for instance, that I must have lady Bell Bloomer, and I feel curiosity to know her sentiments of me, of which, however, I have very little doubt: but all my art can't make her serious; she fences admirably, and keeps me at the length of her foil. To you she will be less on her guard.

Beau. Me! you surprise me, my lord! How can I be of use in developing her ladyship's sentiments?

Lord S. By sifting them. When you talk of me see if she blushes: mention some woman as one whom I admire, and observe if she does not make some spiteful remark on her shape, complexion, or conduct; provoke her to abuse me with violence, or to speak of me with confusion: in either case I have her.

Beau. Your instructions are ample, my lord; but I do not feel myself equal to the embassy.

Lord S. Your pardon, sir! You refuse then to oblige me?

[*With pique.*

Beau. I cannot refuse you; my obligations to your lordship make it impossible: but, of all mankind, I perhaps am the last you should have chosen for the purpose.

Lord S. Nay, pr'ythee don't be ridiculous! it is the last service you can do me; and you are the only man whom I could entrust with so delicate a business.

Beau. I accept it as a proof of your lordship's confidence, and will discharge the commission faithfully. — It will at least give me an occasion to converse with lady Bell, and to converse with her on love. Oh, my heart! how wilt thou contain thy ardours in the trying moment?

[*Aside, and exit.*

Lord S. Ha, ha, ha! I am confirmed in my suspicions, that the fellow has had the vanity to indulge a passion for lady Bell himself. Well, so much the better! the commission I have given him will sufficiently punish him for his presumption.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mrs. Kitty is below, my lord, miss Manners' woman.

Lord S. Ha! send her up, send her up. [*Exit Servant*] I had began to give up that affair; but I think I won't neither. It will be rather a brilliant thing to have lady Bell for a wife, and her friend for a mistress. Yes, it will be a point: I think I'll have the eclat of the thing.

Enter KITTY.

Well, Kitty, what says the little frost-piece, Julia?

Kitty. Oh, nothing new, my lord! she's as insensible as ever. I makes orations all day long of your lordship's merit, and goodness, and fondness, and——

Lord S. [*Staring*] Merit, and goodness, and fondness! And don't you give a parenthesis to my sobriety, and my neatness too? Ha, ha, ha! you foolish little devil, I thought you knew better! Tell her of my fashion, my extravagance; that I play deepest at Well-jie's, am the best drest at the opera, and half ruined myself by granting annuities to pretty girls.

Kitty. What, my lord! is spreading out your faults the way to win a fair lady?

Lord S. Faults! Have I not told thee, that the governing passion of the female mind is the rage of being envied? The most generous of them would like to break the hearts of half-a-dozen of their friends, by the preference given to themselves. Go home again, good Kitty, and con your lesson afresh: if you can pick up any stories of extravagance and gallantry, affix my name to 'em, and repeat them to your mistress.

Kitty. Then she'll tell 'em to lady Bell, perhaps, for a warning——

Lord S. For a warning, quotha! [*Drawling*] My devoirs to lady Bell are of a different kind, and we understand each other. I address her for a wife, because she's the fashion; and I address Julia for a mistress, because 'tis the fashion to have mistresses from higher orders than sempstresses and mantua-makers.

Kitty. And is that your only reason, my lord, for bribing me so high?

Lord S. Not absolutely. I have pique against her guardian; who, though he has the honour to be related to me, will not suffer me to draw on his banker for a single guinea.

Kitty. Oh gemini! I am glad to hear that! I'd do any thing to plague Mr. Fitzherbert, and can go on now with a safe conscience. He had like to have lost me my place once, because he thought I was flighty; but I'll be up with him now.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Belville.

[*Exit.*

Lord S. Go, Kitty, into that room; I'll speak to you presently.

[*Exit Kitty.*

Enter BELVILLE.

My dear Belville! welcome once more to the region of business and pleasure.

Bel. I thank you. But pray, my lord, don't dismiss the lady.

Lord S. The lady! ha, ha, ha! That lady, sir, is a lady's gentlewoman, an't please ye. I suppose you have heard that I am going to marry lady Bell Bloomer; we are the two most fashionable people in town, and in course must come together.

Bel. A clear deduction.

Lord S. Now she has a friend, whom I mean at the same time to take for a mistress: won't that do, eh?

Bel. Decidedly. Every thing with you, my lord, is a hit.

Lord S. True, true! Men of sense have one way of getting through life; men of genius another.

Bel. Doubtless; and the advantage lies with the men of genius, for to their genius are all their faults imputed; nay, their faults are considered as the graceful meanderings of a mind too ethereal to be confined to the rules of common sense and decorum; a mighty easy way of building reputation; ha, ha, ha! You are dressed with infinite malice to-day, my lord.

Lord S. Malice! Not at all: I am dressed for court. I was going to Westminster; but I hear there is to be a presentation of misses to-day, and I would not for the world lose the dear creatures' blushes on their first

appearance; for, faith, most of them will never blush again. Will you go?

Bel. 'Tis too late to dress; besides, I have devoted this day to adventure. I am rambling through the town, discovering what new stars have appeared in the galaxy of beauty during my absence; and a dangerous progress it is: the rays of a pair of black eyes from a chariot in Pall-mall would have annihilated me, had not at the same instant two beautiful blue ones from a window given a fillip to my sinking spirits. A fine turned ankle, whose polish shone through its neat silk stocking, encountered me in St. James's street; but I was luckily relieved by a little rosy mouth, that betrayed, with a deceitful smile, teeth most murderously white. A Galatea darted by me on the right, whilst a Helen swam along on the left. In short, from such sweet besiegers nothing could have preserved me but the sweeter charms of a beloved, though absent fair one. [Sighs.]

Lord S. Now, I never trouble my head about absentees! I love beauty as well as any man; but it must be all in the present tense. Shall I set you down any where? I must go.

Bel. No; but I see your writing things are here; if you'll permit me, I'll pen a short note to Beauchamp on business I had forgot this morning, and dispatch it by a chairman.

Lord S. To be sure. I penned a note ten minutes since to my steward, to raise the poor devils' rents. Upon my soul I pity 'em! But how can it be otherwise when times are so confounded hard?

[Exit singing. Belville seats himself, and writes.]

Bel. Good morning! My compliments to the ladies' blushes.

Re-enter KITTY, passing BELVILLE in the front of the Stage.

Kitty. So, so, his lordship has forgot me; I must go after him.

Bel. *[Comes forward]* Hah! that's the confidante!
[Aside] So, pretty one, whose chattels are you?

Kitty. My mistress's, sir.

Bel. And who is your mistress?

Kitty. A lady, sir.

Bel. And her name?

Kitty. That of her father, I take it.

Bel. Upon my word, your lady has a very brilliant servant: is she as clever as you are?

Kitty. Why, not quite, I think, or she would not keep me to eclipse her.

Bel. Bravo! I wish I knew her! Will you tell me her name?

Kitty. Can you spell?

Bel. Yes.

Kitty. Why then you'll find it in the four-and-twenty letters. [Going.]

Bel. [Catches her] Nay, by heaven, you have raised my curiosity!

Kitty. Pho! what signifies asking me? You know well enough who she is: I heard you and lord Sparkle talking about her. Let me go; for I am going to carry a message to Mr. Fitzherbert.

Bel. Mr. Fitzherbert!

Kitty. Ay, her guardian.

Bel. Her guardian! What, Fitzherbert of Cambridgeshire?

Kitty. Yes; and if you want to know more, he's the crossdest old wretch that ever breathed. You'll find him out by that description; and so, your servant. [Exit.]

Bel. Fitzherbert's ward! and this creature her servant! and lord Sparkle plotting to get her for a mistress! I am astonished! the very lady he this morning offered for my bride! Well, I must find Fitzherbert immediately. Lord Sparkle will perhaps think me guilty of a breach of honour; the imputation I must incur, that I may not be really guilty of a breach of humanity, and of gratitude. [Exit.]

SCENE II. LADY BELL BLOOMER'S House.

Enter FITZHERBERT, followed by a Servant.

Fitz. Tell miss Manners I am here. [Exit Servant]

I cannot be seriously angry with Julia; but I must take some revenge on her disobedience, before I acquaint her with the felicity that attends her. Come in, young Cornish, pray.

Enter PENDRAGON.

Pen. What, does the lady live in this fine house?

Fitz. Yes; but pray observe, that I don't engage she shall be smitten with you: I can go no further than to introduce you; the rest must depend on the brilliancy of your manners.

Pen. Oh, leave me alone for that! I knew how 'twould be if I once showed myself in London. If she has a long purse, I'll whisk her down to Cornwall, jockey lord Sparkle, and have the borough myself.

Fitz. A man of spirit, I see!

Pen. Oh, as to my spirit, that nobody ever doubted! I have beat our exciseman, gone to law with the parson; and, to show you that I did not leave my spirit in the country, since I came to London, I have fined a hackney-coachman for abuse.

Fitz. Very commendable! But here comes the lady.

Enter JULIA.

Mr. Pendragon, this is my ward; who, I am sure, will give your addresses all the encouragement I wish them.

Pen. Servant, ma'am!—She looks plaguy glum.

Julia. I can scarcely support myself.

[*Aside.*

Fitz. Pray, my dear, speak to Mr. Pendragon! You seem greatly confused!

[*Aside.*

Pen. Oh, sir, young ladies will look confused and embarrassed, and all that sort of thing, on these occasions; but we men of the world are up to all that.

Julia. Heavens! is it to such a being I should have been sacrificed?

[*Aside.*

Pen. I see your ward is one of the modest diffident ones. I am surprised at that; bred in high life.

Fitz. Oh, now and then you find a person of that cast in the best company; but they soon get over it.

Pen. Yes, formerly I used to blush, and be modest,

and all that sort of thing; but if any one ever catches me modest again, I'll give 'em my estate for a pilcherd.

Julia. Then it seems impossible——pardon me, sir! [*To Fitzherbert*]——that a union can take place between you and me; for I place modesty amongst the elegancies of manners, and think it absolutely necessary to the character of a gentleman.

Fitz. Well done, *Julia*! [*Aside*] Fie upon you to treat my friend with such asperity.

Pen. O, leave her to me, sir; she's ignorant, but I shall teach her. There are three things, miss, only necessary to the character of a gentleman: a good air, good assurance, and good teeth. [*Grins.*]

Julia. Doesn't his list want good manners, sir?

[*To Fitzherbert.*]

Pen. Oh no, ma'am! if you had said good taste, it would have been nearer the thing; but even that is unnecessary. A gentleman's friends can furnish his house, and choose his books, and his pictures; and he can learn to criticise them by heart. Nothing is so easy as to criticise; people do it continually.

Fitz. You see Mr. Pendragon has information, *Julia*. I'll leave you a few moments, that he may unfold himself to advantage: and remember, if you refuse the man I design for your husband, you lose me.—Keep it up with spirit; I'll wait for you below. [*Apart to Pendragon*] Now shall impertinence and disobedience correct each other. [*Aside, and exit.*]

Pen. Now to strike her with my superior ease. [*Aside*] So, miss, your guardian, I think, has a mind that we shall—in the vulgar speech—marry!

Julia. Well, sir! do you know what belongs to the character of a husband?

Pen. Ay! Do you know what belongs to being a wife?

Julia. I guess that to your wife will belong ill humour with you at home; shame with you abroad; in her face forced smiles; in her heart hidden thorns.

Pen. The devil! What, you have found your tongue, ma'am! Oh, oh, I shall have a fine time on't, I guess, when our connexion begins!

Julia. Our connexion! Pray, sir, drop the idea! I protest to you, that were it possible for me to become your wife, I should be the most wretched of women.

Pen. Oh no, you wouldn't; I hardly know a wife who is not wretched.

Julia. Unfeeling man! Would you presume to enter into a state, to the happiness of which, union of soul, delicacy of sentiment, and all the elegant attention of polished manners are necessary and indispensable?

Pen. What's all that? Union of soul! sentiment! attentions! That's not life, I'm sure.

Julia. I am not able to conceive by what witchcraft Mr. Fitzherbert has been blinded to the weakness of your head, and the turpitude of your heart. Tell him, sir, there is not a fate I would not prefer to that of being united to a man whose vice is the effect of folly, and whose folly is as hateful even as his vice. [Exit.

Pen. Yes, yes, I'll tell, depend on't! Egad, she's a spirit! So much the better; more pleasure in taming her. A meek wife cheats a man of his rights, and deprives him of the pleasure of exacting her obedience. Let me see: vice—folly—impudence—ignorance. Ignorance too! [Exit.

Re-enter JULIA.

Julia. What have I done? I dare not see my guardian; his displeasure will kill me. Oh, Belville, where art thou? Come and shield thy unhappy bride! What steps can I take?

Enter KITTY.

Kitty. Dear ma'am, I'm so grieved to see you so unhappy! If I'd such a cross old guardian, I'd run away from him.

Julia. The very thought which that instant presented itself to my mind, Have you not told me that some relation of yours has lodgings?

Kitty. Yes, ma'am; the most elegantest in London.

Julia. I don't want elegant apartments; but I wish for a short time to be concealed in some family of reputation.

Kitty. To be sure, ma'am; 'tis the most prudent thing you can do.

Julia. And yet my heart fails me.

Kitty. Oh, ma'am, don't hesitate; I'll go and pack up a few things, and call a coach, and be off, before lady Bell comes from court.

Julia. I fear 'tis a wrong step; and yet what other can I take? I dare not reveal my marriage, without the permission of my husband; and till his arrival, I must avoid both a guardian's anger, and the addresses of a lover.

[*Aside, and exit.*]

Kitty. I know not what she means; but there is some mystery I find. So there should be! If ladies had not mysteries, a chamber-maid's place would be hardly worth keeping. I have mysteries too, and she shall have their explanation from lord Sparkle. [Exit.]

SCENE III. CLARINDA'S House.

Enter LADY BELL BLOOMER, meeting CLARINDA.

Lady B. Ha, ha, ha! my dear creature, what an embarrass! Driving swiftly through the streets, lady Whipoord dashed upon us in her flaming phaeton and six, gave a monstrous big Newmarket word to my poor fellows, and with infinite dexterity entangled the traces. It happened near your door; so I have taken shelter with you, and left her ladyship to settle the dispute with my coachman; ha, ha, ha! But why were you not at court to-day?

Cla. I had a teasing headach; but pray tell me what happened there.—Dence take her, she looks as well as ever!

[*Aside.*]

Lady B. Oh, the ladies as usual, brilliant: nothing so flat as the men! The horrid English custom ruins them for conversation. They make themselves members of clubs in the way of business, and members of parliament in the way of amusement: all their passions are reserved for the first, and all their wit for the last.

Cla. 'Tis better in Paris.

Lady B. Oh, 'tis quite another thing! Devoted to elegance, they catch their opinions, their wit, and their bon mots, from the mouths of the ladies. 'Tis in the drawing-room of madame the dutchess the marquis

learns his politics; whilst the sprightly countess dispenses taste and philosophy to a circle of bishops, generals, and abbés.

Cla. Yet I am mistaken if you have not found one Englishman to reconcile you to the manners of the rest. Lord Sparkle for instance; your ladyship thinks, I'm sure, that he has wit at will.

Lady B. Oh yes, quite at will! His wit, like his essence bottle, is a collection of all that is poignant in a thousand flowers; and, like that, is most useful, when he himself is most insipidly vacant.

Cla. With such sentiments I wonder you can suffer his addresses.

Lady B. What can I do? The man is so much the fashion, and I shall be so much envied. Why you know, my dear, for instance, you'd be inclined to stick a poisoned nosegay in my bosom, if I should take him.

Cla. Ha, ha, ha! ridiculous! Believe me, madam, I shall neither prepare a bouquet, nor invoke a fiery shower to grace your nuptials.

Lady B. No, your showers would be tears, I fancy.
[*Aside*] Here he comes!

Cla. Hah! lord Sparkle! your ladyship's accident was fortunate. [*Sneering.*]

Enter LORD SPARKLE.

Lord S. Heavens! lady Bell! your horses fly like the doves of Venus. I followed you from St. James's; but my poor earth-born cattle wouldn't keep pace with yours.

Cla. Oh, don't complain: if her ladyship wou the race, you see she stopped for you at the goal.

Lord S. Charming miss Belmour, what an enlivening intimation! Where was your ladyship on Thursday? You would have found excellent food for your satire at Mrs. Olio's; we had all the law ladies from Lincoln's Inn, a dozen good velvets from Bishopsgate, with the wives and daughters of half the M. D's. and LL. D's. in town.

Lady B. Oh, my entertainment was quite as good as yours! We were in Brook-street, at lady Laurel's, and found her surrounded by her literati of all denominations: We had masters of art, and misses of science.

On one hand an essayist, on the other a moralist; there a poetaster, here a translator; in that corner a philosopher, in the other a compiler of magazines. Tropes, epigrams, and syllogisms flew like sky-rockets in every direction; till the ambition of pre-eminence lighted the flame of controversy, when they gave each other the lie literally with infinite spirit and decorum.

Lord S. Excellent! I'll repeat every word in a place where it will be remembered, and the satire enjoyed.

Cla. In that hope your lordship may safely knock at every door in the street; satire is welcome every where.

Lady B. Yes, if it will bear a laugh; that's the grand art of conversation. They pretend we are fond of slander; but rob scandal of its laugh, and 'twould soon be banished to the second table, for the amusement of butlers and chamber-maids.

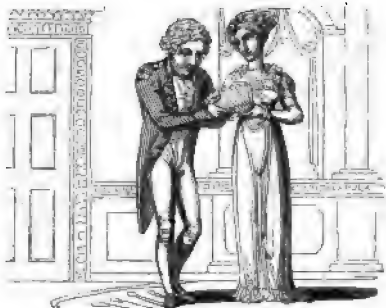
Lord S. Indeed! Then I believe half our acquaintance would go down to the second table too!—
[*Eater a Servant, gives Lord Sparkle a Letter, and exit. Reads it aside*] Julia! astonishing! So sudden in your movements, Mrs. Kitty! [*Aside. Turns to the Ladies*] This vulgar thing called business, is the greatest evil in life; it destroys our most brilliant hours; and is fit only for younger brothers and humble cousins. Miss Belmour, I must tear myself away. Shall I attend your ladyship to your carriage? [*To Lady Bell Bloomer.*]

Lady B. If you please. Miss Belmour, "I must tear myself away," but you'll shine upon us at night.

[*Exeunt Lord Sparkle and Lady Bell Bloomer.*]

Cla. Shine upon you at night! That I know you are insolent enough to believe impossible. What can I think of her sentiments for lord Sparkle? Sometimes I believe 'tis a mere attachment of vanity on both sides. That reserved creature, Beauchamp, is in his confidence; but he leaves town this very day, and I shall have no opportunity of conversing with him. [*Muses*] There is but one chance—going to visit him: but how can I possibly do that? If he had a library, one might go to look at his books. Well, I don't care, go I will; and if I can't invent an excuse, I'll put a good face upon the matter, and go without one. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. *An Apartment at LADY BELL BLOOMER'S.*

Enter LADY BELL BLOOMER, followed by her Maid.

Lady B. Miss Manners gone out in a hackney-coach, and no message left!

Maid. No, madam.

Lady B. Very strange!

Maid. Mr. Beauchamp has been waiting almost an hour for your ladyship's return.

Lady B. Mr. Beauchamp! Here, go and put some otto of roses in that handkerchief. [*Exit Maid*] Now, shall I admit him or not? I suppose he has at length vanquished his modesty, and is come to tell me that—that—Well, I vow I won't hear him. Yes, I will. I long to know the style in which these reserved men make love. To what imprudence would my heart betray me? Yet I may surely indulge myself in hearing him speak of love; in hearing, probably for the first time, its genuine language.

Re-enter Maid, and presents the Handkerchief.

Tell Mr. Beauchamp I am here. [*Exit Maid*] Now, how shall I receive him?

[*Takes her Fan from her Pocket, and traverses the Stage, humming a Tune.*]

Enter BEAUCHAMP.

Oh, Mr. Beauchamp, this is the luckiest thing! I have had ten disputes to-day about the figures in my fan; and you shall decide 'em. Is that beautiful nymph a flying Daphne, or an Atalanta?

Beau. [*Looking at her Fan*] From the terror of the eye, madam, and the swiftness of her step, it must be a Daphne. I think Atalanta's head would be more at variance with her feet; and while she flies, her eye would be invitingly turned on her pursuers.

Lady B. I think you are right! Yes; there does want the kind, inviting glance, to be sure.

Beau. I know one to whom your ladyship appears the disdainful Daphne. How happy would he be could he behold in your eye the encouragement of Atalanta's.

Lady B. Mercy! for so bashful a man, that's pretty plain. [*Aside.*

Beau. This is probably the last visit I can make you before I leave England: will your ladyship permit me, before I leave it, to acquaint you that there is a man whose happiness depends on your favour? [*Agitated.*

Lady B. A man whose happiness depends on me, Mr. Beauchamp? [*Looking on her Fan.*

Beau. Yes, madam! and—and—I cannot go on! why did I accept a commission in which success would destroy me? [*Aside.*

Lady B. The man seems to have chosen a very diffident advocate in you, sir.

Beau. 'Tis more than diffidence, madam, my task is painful.

Lady B. Ay, I thought so! You have taken a brief in a cause you don't like; I could plead it better myself.

Beau. I feel the reproach.

Lady B. 'Tis difficult for you, perhaps, to speak in the third person: try it in the first. Suppose now, ha, ha, only suppose, I say, for the jest's sake, that you yourself have a passion for me, and then try how you can plead it.

Beau. [*Kneels*] Thus—thus would I plead it, and swear, that thou art dear to my heart as fame and

honour! To look at thee is rapture; to love thee, though without hope—felicity!

Lady B. Oh, I thought I should bring him to the point at last! [*Aside.*

Beau. [*Rises*] To what dishonesty have I been betrayed! [*Aside*] Thus, madam, speaks my friend through my lips; 'tis thus he pleads his passion.

Lady B. Provoking! [*Aside*] What friend is this, sir, who is weak enough to use the language of another to explain his heart?

Beau. Lord Sparkle.

Lady B. Lord Sparkle! Was it for him you knelt? [*He bows to her*] Then, sir, I must inform you, that the liberty you have taken—Heavens, how do I betray myself! [*Aside*] Tell me, sir, on your honour, do you wish to succeed in pleading the passion of lord Sparkle?

Beau. [*Hesitating*] My obligations to his lordship—our relationship—the confidence he has reposed in me—

Lady B. Stop, sir! I too will repose confidence in you, and confess that there is a man whom I sometimes suspect not to be indifferent to me; but 'tis not lord Sparkle. Tell him so; and tell him that—that—tell him what you will.

Beau. Heavens, what doth she mean? What language is this her eye speaks?

Lady B. Do you visit me this evening. Here will be many of my friends, and you shall then see me in the presence of the man my heart prefers. [*Beauchamp bows, and goes to the Door; then returns, advances towards Lady Bell, makes an effort to speak; finds it impossible, then bows, and exit*] Heavens! what necessity have lovers for words? What persuasion in that bashful irresolution! Now, shall I let him quit England, or not? What? give up a coronet and lord Sparkle for a cockade and Beauchamp? Preposterous! says vanity. But what says love? I don't exactly know; but I'll examine their separate claims, and settle them with all the casuistry of four-and-twenty. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. LORD SPARKLE'S House.

Enter JULIA and KITTY.

Julia. I am, so agitated with this rash step, that I can hardly breathe! [*Throws herself into a Chair*] Why did you confirm me in my imprudent resolution?

Kitty. Imprudent! I'm sure, ma'am, 'tis very prudent, and very right, that a young lady like you should not be snubb'd, and have her inclination thwarted by an ill-natured, positive old guardian.

Julia. [*Looking round*] What apartments! and the hall we came through had an air much beyond a lodging-house!

Kitty. Oh, dear ma'am, you may be as private here as you please! [*A rapping at the Door*] There's my cousin come home, I dare say; I'll send her to you, and then you may settle terms. [*Exit.*]

Julia. I feel I have done wrong, and yet I am so distracted, I know not how I could have done otherwise.

Enter LORD SPARKLE.

Heavens! lord Sparkle here!

Lord S. Yes, my lovely Julia, here I am; and upon my soul, if you knew the engagements I have broke for the happiness, you would be gratified.

Julia. Gratified! I am astonished! equally astonished at your being here, and at your strange address.

Lord S. Astonished at my being here! Why, to be sure, it is not usual to find a man of fashion in his own house; but when I heard that you were in my house, how could I do less than fly home?

Julia. Home! Your own house! What can all this mean?

Lord S. Mean! Love, gallantry, joy, and ever-new delights.

Julia. Oh! I am betrayed! Where is my wicked servant?

Lord S. Pho, never think of her! Why all this flutter, my sweet girl? You have only changed guardians; and you shall find that being ward to a young man of fashion and spirit, is a very different thing from—

Julia. Oh heavens! what will become of me?

Lord S. Nay, this is quite ridiculous, after having fled to my protection! I feel myself highly honoured by your confidence, and will take care to deserve it.

Julia. Why do I remain here an instant?

[Goes towards the Door.]

Lord S. [Holds her] This is downright rudeness!—But be assured, after having chosen my house for your asylum, I shall not be so impolite as to suffer you to seek another.

Julia. You know, sir, that your house and you I would have fled from to the furthest corner of—

Enter BEAUCHAMP.

Oh, Mr. Beauchamp, save me!—I have been basely betrayed!

Beau. Betrayed, miss Manners!—Yes, madam, I will protect you at every hazard.

Lord S. Come, none of your antique virtues, George, pray. This is a piece of badinage of the eighteenth century, and you can't possibly understand it!—Miss Manners chose to pay me a visit, and I desire you'll leave us.

Julia. My lord, how dare you thus trifle with a woman's honour?

Beau. Be not alarmed, madam, I will defend you.

Lord S. [Takes him aside] Pho! pr'ythee, George, be discreet! This is all female artifice. You popped upon us, and this is a salvo for her reputation.

Beau. Pardon me, my lord; in believing you, in opposition to the evidence of this young lady's terrors, I may be guilty of an irremediable error.

Lord S. Nay, if you are serious, sir, how dare you break in upon my privacy?

Beau. This is not a time to answer you, my lord! The business that brought me here I am indebted to; I should not else have prevented your base designs.

Lord S. Base designs, Mr. Beauchamp!

Beau. Yes, lord Sparkle!—Shall I attend you home, madam?

Julia. Oh, sir, I dare not go there! I fled from lady

Bell's, when I was betrayed into this inhuman man's power.—Convey me to some place where I may have leisure to reflect.

Lord S. And do you think, Mr. Beauchamp, I shall put up with this?—Remember, sir——

Beau. Yes, my lord, that as a man, it is my duty to protect endangered innocence; that as a soldier, it is part of the essence of my character; and whilst I am grateful to you for the commission I have the honour to bear, I will not disgrace it, in suffering myself to be intimidated by your frowns. [*Exit Beau. leading Julia.*]

Lord S. So—so—so! an ancient hero in the house of a modern man of fashion!—Alexander in the tent of Darius!—Scipio and the fair Parthenia! The fellow has not an idea of any morals but those in use during the Olympiads.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Pendragon and his sister, my lord.

Lord S. Who? [*With an Air of disgust.*]

Serv. Mr. and miss Pendragon.

Lord S. Then carry 'em to the housekeeper's room; give 'em jellies and plum-cake, and tell 'em——

Enter PENDRAGON, leading in SOPHY.

Oh, my dear miss Pendragon, you honour me!—But I am the most unlucky man on earth!—I am obliged, upon business of infinite importance, to be at Whitehall within five minutes.

Pen. But first, my lord, you must settle a little business here with miss Pendragon.

Sophy. I tell you, Bobby, I'll speak myself; and as few words are best, pray, my lord, what do you mean by treating me in this manner?

Lord S. I shall be miserable beyond bearing, if any treatment of mine has incurred your displeasure.

Sophy. Well, now you talk of being miserable, you have softened my heart at once. But pray, my lord, is it fashionable for people on the terms you and I are, to keep asunder?

Lord S. What the devil can the girl mean? [*Aside.*]

Sophy. Never even write!—no billets!—no bribing the maid to slip notes into my hand! Why you don't even complain, though 'tis five days since you saw me.

Lord S. Complain! I am sure I have been exceedingly wretched.

Sophy. Then why did not you tell me so? Why, that's the very thing I wanted! If I had known you had been wretched, I should have been happy.

Pen. Well, I see I shall lose an opportunity here.—I came to challenge you, my lord.

Lord S. Challenge me!

Pen. Yes.—Miss Pendragon told me she was dissatisfied; “then,” says I, “I’ll demand satisfaction”—and I didn’t care if things had gone a little further; for to call out a lord would be a feather in my cap as long as I live.—However, you are agreed.

Sophy. Do be quiet, Bobby! We are not agreed. I have heard nothing of settlements yet, nothing of jewels.

Lord S. My dear ma’am, you are pleased to amuse yourself.

Sophy. Why, my lord, those things must be all settled beforehand, you know.

Lord S. Before what?

Sophy. What? Before our marriage, my lord.

Lord S. Marriage! Ha, ha, ha!

Sophy. Hey-day! Will you pretend that you did not intend to marry me, when I can prove that you have courted me from twenty instances?

Lord S. Indeed.

Pen. Ay, that she can.—Come, miss Pendragon, your proofs; I’ll support ’em.

Sophy. Why, in the first place, my lord, you once placed a nosegay in my bosom, and said, “Oh, I wish I were these happy roses!”—the very speech that sir Harry Hargrave made to miss Woodville!—Another time you said “I was a most bewitching and adorable girl!”—exactly what colonel Finch said to lady Lucy Lustre!—Another time you said, “How would a coronet become those shining tresses!”—the very speech of lord Rosehill to miss Danvers: and these couples were every one married.

Lord S. Married! I never heard of 'em!—Who are they? Where the devil do they live?

Pen. Live?—Why in our country to be sure.

[Struts up to him.]

Sophy. No no, Bobby, in *The Reclaimed Rake*, and *The Constant Lovers*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*, and *Roderick Random*, and——

Pen. Yes, sir, they live at Random, with sir Charles Grandison.—Now d'ye know 'em?

Lord S. Ha, ha, ha! you are a charming little lawyer, [To Sophy] and might perhaps establish your proofs for precedents, if sir Charles Grandison was on the bench: yet I never heard of his being made chief justice, though I never thought him fit for any thing else.

Pen. What the devil's this? What, did not you bring all those fine proofs from fashionable life? And are you such a fool as not to understand what we call common-place?

Sophy. Common-place!

Pen. Yes, we persons of elegant life use the figure hyperbole.

Sophy. Hyperbole! what's that?

Pen. Why, that's as much as to say, a stretch.

Sophy. A stretch! What then, you have been mocking me, my lord?

Lord S. Not in the least; I shall be the happiest man existing to, to——'Egad, I must take care of my phrases. [Aside] I mean that I shall be always, and upon all occasions, your most devoted, tres humblement serviteur. —Were there ever two such bumpkins?

[Aside, and exit.]

Sophy. What's he gone? Oh! villain! monster! I am forsaken! Oh! I am rejected!—All Cornwall will know it!

[Cries.]

Pen. Tin-mines and all. But don't ye cry, miss Pen-dragon, don't ye cry.

[Sobs.]

Sophy. Oh! I am rejected!

Pen. I am glad-en't, with all my heart. I'll challenge him yet; and they won't know in Cornwall exactly how it was.—They'll hear that a lord fought about ye, and

all that sort of thing; and whether for ye or against ye, 'twill be much the same.

Sophy. But will you challenge him really, Bobby?

Pen. Upon honour.—I admire the claw of the thing. 'Egad, Sophy, I'm glad he's forsaken thee! Now my character will be finished. A man can't show his face in company till he has stood shot, and fired his pistol in the air.

Sophy. In the air? If you don't fire it through him —

Pen. Oh, never fear! I'll do all that sort of thing.—Come along; I'll go home directly, and practise at the hen-coop in the yard. I'll fire through one end, and you shall hold your calash against the other; and if I don't hit it, say I'm no marksman.

[*Exit Pendragon, with Sophy under his Arm.*]

SCENE III. BEAUCHAMP'S Lodgings.

Enter BEAUCHAMP and JULIA.

Beau. I entreat your pardon for conducting you to my own lodgings: but here, madam, you will be safe; till you determine how to act.—What are your commands for me?

Julia. Oh! Mr. Beauchamp, I have no commands; I have no designs!—I have been very imprudent; I am still more unhappy.

Beau. Shall I acquaint Mr. Fitzherbert?

Julia. It was to avoid him that I left lady Bell.—I have reasons that make it impossible to see Mr. Fitzherbert now.

Beau. Is there no other friend?

Julia. O yes, I have one friend. Were he here, all my difficulties would vanish. It may seem strange, Mr. Beauchamp, but I expect that you believe—Heavens! here's company! [*Looks at the Wing*] 'Tis miss Belmour; the last woman on earth whom I would trust!—Where can I go?

Beau. Miss Belmour! very odd!—But pray be not uneasy.—That room, madam, if you will condescend—

[*Julia rushes through the Door.*]

Enter CLARINDA, laughing.

Cla. Ha, ha, ha! I expect your gravity to be amazingly discomposed at so hardy a visit; but I took it very ill that you did not design to call upon me before your departure: and so, as I was passing your door, I stopped, in mere frolic, to inquire the cause.

Beau. You do me infinite honour, madam. I am thankful that I failed in my attention, since it has procured me so distinguished a favour.

Cla. Oh, your most obedient!—You are going to leave England for a long while! You'll find us all in different situations probably on your return!—Your friend, lord Sparkle, for instance: I am informed that he is really to marry lady Bell Bloomer; but I don't believe it. Do you?

Beau. 'Tis impossible, madam, for me——

Cla. Pho! pho! impossible! Such friends as you are, I suppose, keep nothing from one another.—We women can't exist without a confidante, and I dare say you men are full as communicative. Not that it is any thing to me; but as I have a prodigious regard for lady Bell——

Bel. [*Without*] Beauchamp! Beauchamp!

Cla. Heaven and earth, how unlucky! Here's some man! I am the nicest creature breathing in my reputation.—What will he think? I'll run into this room.

[*Runs towards the Door.*]

Beau. Pardon me, madam, you cannot enter there.

[*Prevents her.*]

Cla. I must. [*Pushes at the Door*] Ho, ho! the door is held, sir.

[*Pushes at the Door.*]

Beau. My dear madam, I am infinitely sorry for the accident; but suppose—suppose, I say, ma'am, that a friend of mine has been in a duel, and concealed in that room?

Cla. Ridiculous! I saw the corner of a white satin petticoat. Is that the dress of your duelling friends? I will go in. [*Struggles*] So! 'tis too late.

[*Flings away spitefully.*]

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. So, so, so! I beg your pardon. How could you be so indiscreet, Beauchamp? Though a young soldier, I thought you knew enough of generalship to be prepared for a surprise.

Cla. Oh, so he was; but not for two surprises.

Beau. Believe me, Belville—I am infinitely concerned— *[To Clarinda.]*

Cla. Oh! I detest your impertinent concern. Keep it for the lady in the other room.

Bel. A lady in the other room too! Hey-day, Beauchamp, who would have suspected—

Beau. 'Tis all a mistake. The lady in the next room—But pr'ythee go.

Bel. Only tell me if you have seen Fitzherbert. I have been seeking him this hour, on a business of the utmost consequence.

Beau. I have not; but about this time you'll find him at home.

Bel. Enough!—Miss Belmour, pray suffer no concern; depend on my honour.—Beauchamp, *[Takes him aside]* who is the lady in the other room?

Beau. Had I meant you to have known, that room would have been unnecessary.

[Belville seems still inquisitive; Beauchamp draws him towards the Wing.]

Cla. Now do I die to know who it can be. Indeed 'tis necessary for my own sake. Whilst she has been hid, I have been exposed; and who knows what the creature may say?—I'll try once more. She has my secret, and I'll have hers. *[Aside. Forces open the Door.]*

Re-enter JULIA from the Room.

Julia. Belville! *[Runs towards him.]*

Bel. Julia! *[Starts back.]*

Cla. Miss Manners! Ha, ha, ha!

Julia. Oh, Belville, throw me not from you!

Bel. Astonishing!

Cla. Oh, charming! the modest Julia, and the reserved Beauchamp! Ha, ha, ha!—But, Mr. Belville, how came you of this sober party? Ha, ha, ha!

Julia. Speak to me.

Clu. Now, Mr. Beauchamp, you know the purport of my visit.—I had heard that miss Manners has been seen to visit you, and not being willing to trust to such a report, was resolved, if possible, to discover the truth.

Bel. Wretched woman! [*To Julia.*]

Julia. Barbarous creature! [*To Clarinda*] Oh, hear me, I conjure you! [*To Belville.*]

Bel. Hear you! No, madam. And if my contempt, my hatred, my—oh!—You, sir, I must speak to in another place; yet perhaps you were not acquainted that—what would I say?—The word which I have pronounced with rapture, chokes me.—From this moment, farewell! [*To Julia, and exit.*]

Beau. What can I think of all this?

Julia. Oh, sir!

Beau. Permit me, madam, to ask if you have long known Mr. Belville?

Julia. Yes, too long.

Clu. Oh, oh, too long! Ay, young ladies should be cautious how they form acquaintance. For my part—But you look ill, child. [*Takes her by the Hand*] Well, I have no hard heart; I can pity your weakness, miss; I won't upbraid you now. My coach waits. Shall I conduct you home?

Julia. Yes, to lady Bell—to lady Bell. I am very ill.

Clu. Adieu, Mr. Beauchamp. This has been an unlucky frolic. 'Tis amazing you grave people can be so careless. [*Exeunt Clarinda and Julia.*]

Beau. An unlucky frolic indeed! I always considered miss Manners as a pattern of delicacy and virtue; nor dare I now, spite of circumstances, think otherwise.

Enter LORD SPARKLE.

Lord S. So, so, seignior Quixote! What, so soon lost your prize! Ay, you see quarrelling for these virtuous women is as unprofitable as the assault of the windmills.—Have you seen lady Bell in my behalf?

Beau. Lady Bell, my lord? Why, shure 'tis impossible, after your attempt on miss Manners—

Lord S. Pshaw! Women like to receive the devoirs

of those whom others of their sex have found so dangerous. What did you discover of lady Bell's sentiments towards me?

Beau. I meant to have given the intelligence softened, but the agitations of my mind make it impracticable; I must therefore inform you, in one word, lady Bell Bloomer's choice is made, and that choice has not fallen upon your lordship.

Lord S. Then I must inform you, in two words, that I am convinced you are mistaken. But your reasons, sir, your reasons?

Beau. Her ladyship furnished me with a decisive one: she acknowledged a pre-engagement; and added, if I visited her this evening, I should see her in the presence of the man her heart prefers.

Lord S. [*Laughs violently*] Excellent! charming ingenuity! Ha, ha, ha! The kindest, softest message that ever woman framed! And you, like the sheep laden with the golden fleece, bore it insensible of its value.—Ha, ha, ha! you can't see through the pretty artifice?

Beau. No really.

Lord S. Why, 'tis I who am to be there; there by particular invitation. You'll see her in my presence; and this was her pretty, mysterious way of informing me that I am the object of her choice.

Beau. Indeed!

Lord S. Without a doubt! But you deep people are the dullest fellows at a hint. But I am satisfied, and shall go to her rout in brilliant spirits. You shall come, and see my triumph confirmed.—Come, you rogue, and see the lovely widow in the presence of the man her heart prefers.—Poor George! you must have been cursedly stupid not to have conceived that I was the person. [*Exit.*]

Beau. Yes, I will come.—Oh vanity! I had dared to explain—yes, I construed the sweet confusion!—Oh, I blush at my own arrogance! Lord Sparkle must be right.—Well, this night decides it. Narrowly will I watch each tone and look, to discover—oh! ever blest!—he whom her heart prefers. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. *An Apartment at LADY BELL BLOOMER'S.*

Enter LADY BELL BLOOMER and Servant.

Lady B. Are the tables placed in the outer room?

Serv. Yes, ma'am, all but the pharoah table.

Lady B. Then carry that there too.—I positively will not have a table in the drawing-room. [*Exit Servant*] Those who play don't visit me, but the card-tables; and where they find them is very immaterial. Let me see: for whist, sir James Jennet, lady Ponto, Mrs. Lurchem, and lady Carmine; for pharoah, Mrs. Evergreen, lord Dangle, sir Harry—Hey-day!

Enter CLARINDA and JULIA.

Cla. Come, child, don't faint. You had more cause for terror half an hour ago.

Lady B. Heavens! Julia, where have you been?

Cla. Ay, that's a circumstance you would not have known, but for an accident; and I am very sorry it fell to my lot to make the discovery.

Lady B. [*Takes Julia's Hand*] Speak, my love!

Julia. Miss Belmour will tell you all she knows; I am too wretched.

Cla. Nay, as to what I know, I know very little: I can tell what I saw, indeed. Having received intimations not quite consonant to one's notions of decorum, I pretended a frolic, and called on Mr. Beauchamp, and there I found this lady concealed.

Lady B. Heavens, *Julia!* 'tis impossible.

Cla. Nay, she can't attempt to deny what I myself saw. Other discoveries had liked to have been made too; but miss Manners may explain them herself, for I see your rooms begin to fill. I shall report that your ladyship is a little indisposed, as an excuse for your not immediately appearing. [Exit.]

Lady B. [*With a Countenance of Terror*] *Julia!* you at Mr. Beauchamp's?

Julia. Lady Bell, though I have acted rashly, and was indeed found there, I am not the guilty creature you imagine. I am married! I will no longer conceal it. [Bursts into Tears.]

Lady B. Married! Oh, heavens!

[*Throws herself in a Chair, with her Back to Julia.*]

Julia. I dared not reveal it to my guardian; and for that reason fled from your house.

Lady B. O *Julia*, and you are married? What a serpent have I nourished! But forgive me! You knew not—Alas! I knew not myself, till this moment, how much——

Julia. My dearest madam, do not add to my afflictions; for indeed they are severe.

Lady B. Ungenerous girl! why did you conceal from me your situation?

Julia. Good heavens! is it destined that one imprudent step is to lose me every blessing? In the agonies of my heart I flew to your friendship, and you kill me with reproaches.

Lady B. And you have killed me by your want of confidence. Oh, *Julia!* had you revealed to me——

Julia. I dared not; for when Mr. Belville prevailed on me to give him my hand——

Lady B. Mr. Belville! Mr. Belville, say you?

[*Eagerly.*]

Julia. Yes; it was in Paris we were married.

Lady B. So, so, so, what a pretty mistake I made; but it was a mistake! [*Aside*] And so my sweet Julia is married! married in Paris! sly thing! But how came you at Mr. Beauchamp's, my love?

Julia. In my rash flight this morning, my wicked maid betrayed me into lord Sparkle's house. There Mr. Beauchamp snatched me from ruin, and gave me a momentary asylum in his lodgings.

Lady B. Did Beauchamp?—But what is his worth and his gallantry to me? Can't he do a right thing but my heart must triumph? [*Aside.*]

Julia. At Mr. Beauchamp's my husband found me; and found me hid with so suspicious a secrecy! Ha! here comes Mr. Fitzherbert! How can I see him?

Enter FITZHERBERT.

Fitz. My Julia! my dear Julia!

Julia. Oh, sir!—

Fitz. Come, I know all; and to relieve one cause of your distress, will tell you, that the lover I shocked you with to-day, was only my agent in the little revenge I had resolved to take for your having married, without my consent, the very man for whom all my cares designed you.

Julia. Is it possible?

[*Clasps his Hands.*]

Fitz. At the moment he left Paris for Florence, you received my directions to return home; thus Belville's letters missed you, and he remained ignorant that you were in London.

Julia. Oh, sir! had you revealed this to me this morning, what evils should I have escaped!

Fitz. My dear girl, I decreed you a little punishment; but your own rashness has occasioned you a severer portion than you deserved.

Lady B. But where is the bridegroom?

Fitz. He is without, satisfied from the mouth of Beau-

chance of your conduct, [*To Julia*] and impatient to fold his Julia to his heart.

Julia. Oh, sir, lead me to him. To find my husband, and to be forgiven by you, are felicities too great.

[*Exit, led by Fitzherbert.*]

Lady B. What a discovery has Julia's marriage made to me of my own heart! I have persuaded myself it knew no passion but the desire of conquest; but the pangs of jealousy proved to me, in one moment, that all its sense is love! *Exit.*

SCENE II.

An elegant Apartment lighted up; Card Parties seen; Servants carrying Refreshments.

Enter PENDRAGON, meeting CLARINDA and two Ladies, who come forward.

Pen. Bobs, miss Belmour, how d'ye do? I didn't think to see you. Mr. Fitzherbert brought me here, and I have been examining every face, to see if I knew any body; but fine ladies are so alike, that one must have long intimacy to know one's acquaintance. Red cheeks, white necks, and smiling lips, crowd every room.

1 Lady. Hey-day, a natural curiosity! Pray, sir, how long have you been in the world?

Pen. How long? Just twenty years last Lammas.

1 Lady. Pho, I don't inquire into your age! how long is it since you left your native woods? Was you ever at a rout before?

Pen. Ay, that I was, last week: it beat this all to nothing. 'Twas at our neighbour's, the wine merchant's, at his country house at Kentish-town.

Cl. Oh lud, I wish I had been of your party; I should have enjoyed a Kentish-town rout.

Pen. Oh, you must have been pleased; for the rooms were so little, and the company so large, that every thing was done with one consent. We were packed so close, that if one party moved, all the rest were obliged to obey the motion.

1 *Lady*. Delightful! Well, sir——

Pen. We had all the fat widows, notable misses, and managing wives of the parish; so there was no scandal, for they were all there. At length the assembly broke up—Such clattering, and squeezing down the gangway staircase; whilst the little footboy bawl'd from the passage, "Miss Bobbin's bonnet is ready!" "Mrs. Sugarplum's lantern waits!" "Mrs. Peppercorn's patens stop the way!" *[Imitating.*

Cla. Oh, you creature, come with me; I must exhibit him in the next room.

1 *Lady*. Oh, stay; take my card: I shall have company next Wednesday, and I insist on yours. *[Exit Clarinda and Pendragon]* He is really amusing!

Enter LORD SPARKLE from the Top; two Gentlemen come forward also.

But hide your diminished heads, ye beaux and wittings! for here comes lord Sparkle.

Lord S. *[Speaking as he comes down]* I hope the belles won't hide theirs; for in an age where the head is so large a part of the lady, one should look about for the sex.

1 *Gent.* Well, my lord, you see I have obeyed your summons: I should not have been here, notwithstanding lady Bell's invitation, had you not pressed it.

2 *Gent.* Nor I. I promised to meet a certain lady in the gallery at the opera to-night; and I regret that I did not, for I see her husband is here. Why did you press us so earnestly to come?

Lord S. Why, faith, to have as many witnesses as I could to my glory. 'This night is given by lady Bell to me. I am the hero of the fete, and expect your congratulations. Here the dear creature comes.

Enter LADY BELL BLOOMER, coming down from the Top, addressing the Company.

Lady B. How do you do? How do you do? *[On each side]* You wicked creature, why did you disap-

point me last night? Lady Harriot, I have not seen you this age! Oh, lord Sparkle, I have been detained from my company by Mr. Fitzherbert planning a scheme for your amusement.

Lord S. Indeed! I did not expect that attention from him; though I acknowledge my obligations to your ladyship's politeness.

Lady B. That air of self-possession, I fancy, would be incommoded, if you guessed at the entertainment. [*Aside*] Have you seen Mr. Beauchamp?

Lord S. For a moment. But, charming lady Bell, [*Takes her Hand*] I shall make you expire with laughing. I really believe the poor fellow explained your message in his own favour; ha, ha, ha!

Lady B. Ridiculous! ha, ha, ha!

Enter BEAUCHAMP.

Beau. Ha! 'tis true! There they are, retired from the crowd, and enjoying the privacy of lovers. [*Aside.*

Lady B. See, there he is: I long to have a little badinage on the subject. Let us tease him.

[*Apart to Lord Sparkle.*

Lord S. Oh, nothing can be more delightful. [*Apart*] Hither, sighing shepherd, come! Come, Beauchamp, take one last, one lingering look: shan't he, lady Bell?

Lady B. Doubtless, if he has your lordship's leave.

Lord S. He seems astonished; ha, ha, ha! Nay, it is cruel! If the poor youth has the misfortune to be stricken, you know he can't resist fate. Ixion sighed for Juno.

Lady B. Yes, and he was punished too. What punishment, Mr. Beauchamp, shall we decree for you?

Beau. I am astonished! Was it for this your ladyship commanded me to attend you?

Lady B. How did I command you? Do you remember the words?

Beau. I do, madam. You bid me come this evening, that I might behold you in the presence of the man your heart prefers.

Lady B. Well, sir, and now—now you see me——

Lord S. Oh, the sweet confusion of the sweet confession!
[*Kisses her Hand.*]

Beau. This ostentation of felicity, madam, is ungenerous, since you know my heart; 'tis unworthy you. But I thank you for it; I have a pang the less. [*Going.*]

Lady B. Hold, sir; are you going?

Beau. This instant, madam. I came in obedience to your commands; but my chaise is at your door; and before your gay assembly breaks up, I shall be far from London, and in a day or two from England. I probably now see your ladyship for the last time. Adieu.

Lady B. Stay, Mr. Beauchamp! [*Agitated.*]

Lord S. Ay, pr'ythee, stay; I believe lady Bell has a mind to make you her conjugal father at the wedding.

Beau. I forgive you, my lord: excess of happiness frequently overflows into insolence; and it is the privilege of felicity to be unfeeling. But how, madam, has the humble passion which has so long consumed my life, rendered me so hateful to you, as to prompt you to this barbarity? I have not insulted you with my love; I have scarcely dared whisper it to myself; how then have I deserved——

Lady B. O, mercy, don't be so grave; I am not insensible to your merit; nor have I beheld your passion with disdain. But what can I do? Lord Sparkle has so much fashion, so much elegance, so much——

Lord S. My dearest lady Bell, you justify my ideas of your discernment; and thus I thank you for the distinguished honour.
[*Kneels to kiss her Hand.*]

Enter SOPHY, from the Wing.

Sophy. Oh, you false-hearted man! [*Cries.*]

Lord S. Hey-day! [*Starting up.*]

Sophy. Don't believe a word he says, for all you are so fine a lady. He'll tell you of happiness and misery, and this, and that, and the other; but 'tis all commonplace, and hyperbole, and all that sort of thing.

Lady B. Indeed! What, has this young lady claims on your lordship?

Lord S. Claims! ha, ha, ha! Is it my fault that a little rustic does not know the language of the day? Compliments are the ready coin of conversation, and 'tis every one's business to understand their value.

Re-enter PENDRAGON.

Pen. [*Clapping him on the Shoulder*] True, my lord, true; and pray instruct me what was the value of the compliment, when you told me I should make a figure in the guards, and that you would speak to your great friends to make me a colonel?

Lord S. Value! why, of just as much as it would bring! You thought it so valuable then, that you got me a hundred extra votes on the strength of it; and you are now a little ungrateful wretch, to pretend 'twas worth nothing.

Enter FITZHERBERT, leading in JULIA.

Fitz. But here, Lord Sparkle, is a lady who claims a right on a different foundation. She had no election interest to provoke your flatteries, yet you have not scrupled to profess love to her, whilst under the roof of her friend, whose hand you were soliciting in marriage.

Julia. Yes, I entreat your ladyship not to fancy that you are to break the hearts of half our sex by binding Lord Sparkle in the adamantine chains of marriage. I boast an equal right with you, and don't flatter yourself I shall resign him.

Lord S. Mere malice, lady Bell! Fitzherbert's malice! I never had a serious thought of miss Manners in my life.

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. What, my lord! and have you dared to talk of love to that lady without a serious thought?

Lord S. Hey-day! what right have you—

Bel. Oh, very trifling! only the right of a husband. The lady so honoured by your love-making in jest is my wife: in course, all obligations to her devolve on me.

Lord S. Your wife! my dear Belville, I give you joy with all my soul! You see 'tis always dangerous to keep secrets from your friends. But is any body else coming? Have I any new crimes to be accused of? Any more witnesses coming to the bar?

Bel. No; but I am a witness in a new cause, and accuse you of loading the mind of my friend Beauchamp with a sense of obligation you had neither spirit or justice to confer.

Lady B. A commission, my lord, which was sent Mr. Beauchamp under a blank cover, by one who could not bear to see his noble spirit dependant on your caprices.

Bel. And when his sentiments pointed out your lordship as his benefactor, you accepted the honour, and have laid heavy taxes on his gratitude.

Lord S. Well, and what is there in all that? Beauchamp did not know to whom he was obliged; and wouldn't it have been a most unchristian thing to let a good action run about the world belonging to nobody? I found it a stray orphan, and so fathered it. But you, Fitzherbert, I see are the lawful owner of the brat; so, pr'ythee, take it back; and thank me for the honour of my patronage.

Fitz. Your affected pleasantry, lord Sparkle, may shield you from resentment, but it will not from contempt. Your effrontery——

Lord S. Effrontery! Pr'ythee make distinctions! What in certain lines would be effrontery, in me is only the ease of fashion; that delightful thing, which enables me at this moment to stand serene amidst your meditated storm. Come, my dear lady Bell, let us leave these good gentry, and love ourselves amidst the delights of fashion, and the charms of bon ton.

Lady B. Pardon me, my lord! As caprice is absolutely necessary to the character of a fine lady, you will not be surprised if I give an instance of it now; and spite of your elegance, your fashion, and your wit, present my hand to this poor soldier, who boasts only worth, spirit, honour, and love.

Beau. Have a care, madam! Feelings like mine are

not to be trifled with! Once already the hopes you have inspired——

Lady B. The hour of trifling is past; and surely it cannot appear extraordinary, that I prefer the internal worth of an uncorrupted heart, to the outward polish of a mind too feeble to support itself against vice, in the seductive forms of fashionable dissipation.

Lord S. Hey-day! what is your ladyship in the plot?

Fitz. The plot has been deeper laid than you, my lord, have been able to conceive. As I have the misfortune to be related to you, I thought it my duty to watch over your conduct. I have seen your plans, and many of them have been defeated, though you knew not by what means. But what fate does your lordship design for these young people, decoyed by you from their native ignorance and home?

Lord S. Let them return to their native ignorance and home as fast as they can.

Pen. No, no; hang me if I do that! I know life now, and life I'll have—Hyde-park, plays, operas, and all that sort of thing. But, old gentleman, as you promised to do something for me, what think ye of a commission? The captain there can't want his now; suppose you turn it over to me.

Fitz. No, young man, you shall be taken care of; but the requisites of a soldier are not those of pertness and assurance. Intrepid spirit, nice honour, generosity, and understanding, all unite to form him. It is these which make a British soldier the first character in Europe. It is such soldiers who make England invincible, and her glittering arms triumphant in every quarter of the globe.

Sophy. Well, Bobby may do as he will. I'll go back to Cornwall directly, and warn all my neighbours to take special care how they trust to a lord's promises at an election again.

Lord S. Well, great attempts and great failings mark the life of a man of spirit!—There is eclat even in my disappointment to-night; and I am ready for a fresh set of adventures to-morrow.

Fitz. Incurrible man! But I have done with you. Beauchamp has answered all my hopes, and the discernment of this charming woman, in rewarding him, merits the happiness that awaits her; and that I may give the fullest sanction to her choice, I declare him heir to my estate. This, I know, is a stroke your lordship did not expect.

Beau. And was it then to you, sir!—The tumults of my gratitude——

Fitz. Your conduct has completely rewarded me; and in adopting you——

Lady B. Oh, I protest against that! Our union would then appear a prudent, sober business, and I shall lose the credit of having done a mad thing for the sake of the man—my heart prefers.

Fitz. To you I resign him with pleasure; his fate is in your hands.

Lady B. Then he shall continue a soldier; one of those whom love and his country detain to guard her dearest, last possessions.

Beau. Love and my country! Yes, ye shall divide my heart. Animated by such passions, our forefathers were invincible; and if we'd preserve the freedom and independence they obtained for us, we must imitate their virtues.



THE
WAY TO KEEP HIM.

A Comedy.

BY ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

Author of several Dramatic Pieces: and

PROMPTER OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.



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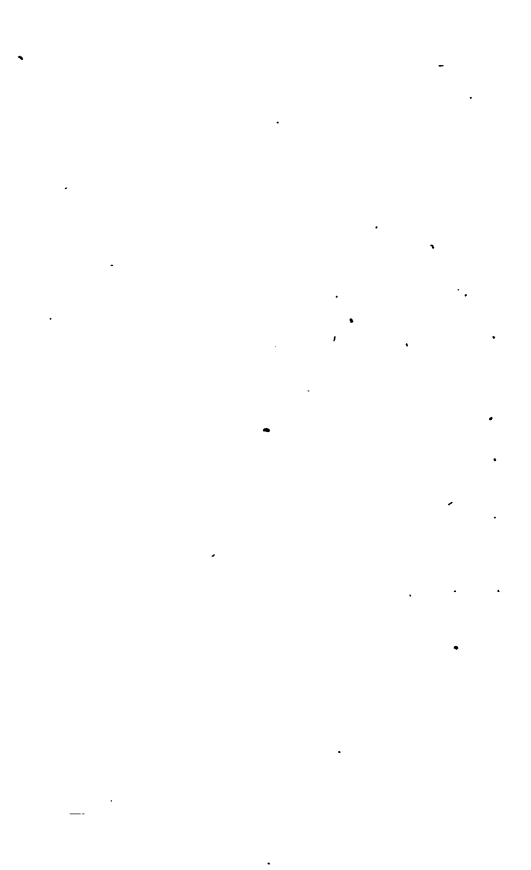
**FOR WHITTINGHAM AND ARLISS, PATERNOSTER
ROW, LONDON.**

1815.



THE WAY TO KEEP HIM

WAS produced at Drury-lane in 1760. Mr. Murphy frequently acknowledges his obligations to French dramatists; and we wish that every author, who avails himself of "foregone conclusions" on the Gallic stage, was equally honest and equally successful. *Le Prejugé à-la-mode* of Monsieur D'Urval has very slightly contributed to the character of *Sir Bashful Constant*; the play, however, though not entirely "English, sir, from top to toe," is sufficiently original to lay every claim to the favour it was at first received with, is still honoured by, and is likely to experience for many years of future representation.



PROLOGUE.

WHEN first the haughty critic's direful rage,
With gothic fury, over-ran the stage,
Then prologues rose, and strove with varied art
To gain the soft accesses to the heart,
Through all the tuneful tribe th' infection flew,
And each great genius—his petition drew;
In *forma pauperis* address'd the pit,
With all the gay antithesis of wit,
Their sacred art poor poets own'd a crime;
They sigh'd in *simile*, they bow'd in rhyme.
For charity they all were forc'd to beg;
And every prologue was "*a wooden leg*."

Next these a hardy, manly race appear'd,
Who knew no dullness, and no critics fear'd.
From Nature's store each curious tint they drew,
Then boldly held the piece to public view:
"Lo! here, exact proportion! just design!
The bold relief! and the unerring line!
Mark in soft union how the colours strike!
This, sirs, you will, or this you ought to like."
They bid defiance to the foes of wit,
"Scatter'd like ratsbane up and down the pit."

Such prologues were of yore;—our hard to-night
Disdains a false compassion to excite;
Nor too secure your judgment would oppose;
He packs no jury, and he dreads no foes.
To govern here no party can expect;
An audience will preserve its own respect.

To catch the foibles, that misguide the fair,
From trifles spring, and end in lasting care,
Our author aims; nor this alone he tries,
But as fresh objects, and new manners rise,
He bids his canvass glow with various dyes;
Where sense and folly mix in dubious strife,
Alternate rise, and struggle into life.
Judge if with art the mimic strokes he blend;
If amicably light and shade contend;
The mental features if he trace with skill;
See the piece first, then damn it if you will.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally acted.

<i>Lovemore</i>	Mr. Garrick.
<i>Sir Brilliant Fashion</i>	Mr. Palmer.
<i>Sir Bashful Constant</i>	Mr. Yates.
<i>William</i>	Mr. King.
<i>Sideboard</i>	Mr. Ackman.
<i>Widow Belmour</i>	Mrs. Cibber.
<i>Mrs. Lovemore</i>	Mrs. Yates.
<i>Lady Constant</i>	Mrs. Davis.
<i>Muslin</i>	Mrs. Clare.
<i>Mignionet</i>	Mrs. Bradshaw.
<i>Furnish</i>	Miss Hipposley.

Drury Lane, 1814. Covent Garden, 1813.

<i>Lovemore</i>	Mr. Rae.	Mr. C. Kemble.
<i>Sir Brilliant Fashion</i> .	Mr. Wrench.	Mr. Jones.
<i>Sir Bashful Constant</i> .	Mr. Bannister.	Mr. Matthews.
<i>William</i>	Mr. J. Wallack.	Mr. Hamerton.
<i>Sideboard</i>	Mr. Fisher.	Mr. Treby.
<i>Pompey</i>	Mr. Evans.	Mr. Dumas.
<i>Servant</i>	Mr. Maddocks.	Mr. Sarjant.
<i>Widow Belmour</i> . . .	Mrs. Glover.	Mrs. Jordan.
<i>Mrs. Lovemore</i>	Mrs. Orger.	Mrs. Egerton.
<i>Lady Constant</i>	Mrs. Horn.	Miss Bolton.
<i>Muslin</i>	Miss Mellon.	Mrs. Gibbs.
<i>Mignionet</i>	Miss Tidswell.	Miss Logan.
<i>Furnish</i>	Mrs. Scott.	Mrs. Coates.
<i>Maid</i>	Miss Jones.	Miss Cox.

SCENE—LONDON.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *A Room in LOVEMORE'S House.*

WILLIAM *discovered at Cards, with a brother Servant.*

Wil. A PLAGUE on it!—I've turn'd out my game.
—Is forty-seven good?

Serv. Equal.—

Wil. A plague go with it—tierce to a queen—

Serv. Equal.

Wil. I've ruin'd my game, and be hang'd to me. I don't believe there's a footman in England plays with worse luck than myself.—Four aces are fourteen!

Serv. That's hard:—cruel, by Jupiter!

Wil. Four aces are fourteen—fifteen. [Plays.]

Serv. There's your equality.

Wil. Very well—sixteen—[Plays] seventeen—
[Plays.]

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. There's a couple of you, indeed!—You're so fond of the vices of your betters, that you're scarce out of your beds, when you must pretend to imitate them and their ways, forsooth.

Wil. Pr'ythee be quiet, woman, do—Eighteen—

[*Plays.*

Mus. Set you up, indeed, Mr. Coxcomb—

Wil. Nineteen!—Clubs—

[*Plays.*

Mus. Have done with your foolery, will ye? and send my lady word—

Wil. Hold your tongue, Mrs. Muslin, you'll put us out.—What shall I play?—I'll tell you, woman, my master and I desire to have nothing to say to you or your lady—Twenty—Diamonds!

[*Plays.*

Mus. But I tell you, Mr. Saucebox, that my lady desires to know when your master came home last night, and how he is this morning?

Wil. Pr'ythee, be quiet: I and my master are resolved to be teas'd no more by you. And so, Mrs. Go-between, you may return as you came.—What the devil shall I play?—We'll have nothing to do with you, I tell you—

Mus. You'll have nothing to do with us!—But you shall have to do with us, or I'll know the reason why.

[*Snatches the Cards out of his Hands.*

Wil. Death and fury! This meddling woman has destroyed my whole game.

Mus. Now, sir, will you be so obliging as to send an answer to her questions—How and when your rake-helly master came home last night?

Wil. I'll tell you what, Mrs. Muslin,—you and my master will be the death of me at last; that's what you will.—In the name of charity what do you both take me for? Whatever appearances may be, I am but mortal mould: nothing supernatural about me.

Mus. Upon my word, Mr. Powderpuff!—

Wil. I have not indeed—And so, do you see, flesh and blood can't hold it always—I can't be for ever a slave to your whims, and your second-hand airs.

Mus. Second-hand airs!—

Wil. Yes, second-hand airs!—You take them at your ladies' toilets with their cast gowns, and so you descend to us with them.—And then, on the other hand, there's my master!—Because he chooses to live upon the principal of his health, and so run out his whole stock,

as fast as he can, he must have the pleasure of my company with him in his devil's dance to the other world.—Never at home till three, four, five, six in the morning!

Mus. Ay, a vile, ungrateful man! to have so little regard for a wife that dotes upon him.—And your love for me is all of a piece. I've no patience with you both.—A couple of false, perfidious, abandoned, profligate——

Wil. Hey, boy! where's your tongue running?—My master is, as the world goes, a good sort of a civil kind of a husband, and I,—heaven help me! a poor simpleton of an amorous, constant puppy, that bears with all the follies of his little tyrant here.—Come and kiss me, you jade, come and kiss me.

Mus. Paws off, Cæsar——Don't think to make me your dape. I knew, when you go with him to this new lady, this Bath acquaintance—and I know you're as false as my master, and give all my dues to your Mrs. Mignonet there——

Wil. Hush,—not a word of that.—I'm ruined, pressed, and sent on board a tender directly, if you blab that I trusted you with that secret.—But to charge me with falsehood, injustice, and ingratitude! My master, to be sure, does drink an agreeable dish of tea with the widow.—Has been there every night this month past.—How long it will last, heaven knows! But thither he goes, and I attend him.—I ask my master,—“Sir,” says I, “what time would you please to want me?”—He gives me his answer, and then I strut by Mrs. Mignonet, without so much as tipping her one glance; she stands watering at the mouth, and “A pretty fellow, that,” says she.—“Ay, ay, gaze on,” says I, “gaze on;—I see what you would be at:—you'd be glad to have me,—you'd be glad to have me!—But, sour grapes, my dear! I'll go home and cherish my own lovely wanton.”—And so I do, you know I do.—Then, after toying with thee, I hasten back to my master—later indeed than he desires, but

always too soon for him. He's loath to part; he lingers and dangles, and I stand cooling my heels.—O, to the devil I pitch such a life!—

Mus. Why don't you strive to reclaim the vile man then?

Wil. Softly, not so fast; I have my talent to be sure! yes, yes, I have my talent; some influence over my master's mind:—But can you suppose that I have power to turn the drift of his inclinations, and lead him as I please?—And to whom?—to his wife? Pshaw! ridiculous, foolish, and absurd!

Mus. Mighty well, sir! can you proceed?

Wil. I tell you a wife is out of date now-a-days; time was—but that's all over—a wife's a drug now; mere tar-water, with every virtue under heaven, but no body takes it.

Mus. Well, I swear I could slap your impudent face.

Wil. Come and kiss me, I say—

Mus. A fiddle-stick for your kisses!—while you encourage your master to open rebellion against the best of wives—

Wil. I tell you it's her own fault; why don't she strive to please him, as you do me?—Come, throw your arms about my neck—

Mus. Ay, as I used to do, Mr. Brazen?—Hush! My lady's bell rings.—How long has he been up?—When did he come home?

Wil. At five this morning; rubbed his forehead, damn'd himself for a blockhead, went to bed in a peevish humour, and is now in tiptop spirits with sir Brilliant Fashion, in the next room. *[Bell rings.]*

Mus. O lud! that bell rings again—There, there, let me be gone. *[Kisses him, and exit.]*

Wil. There goes high and low life contrasted in one person. 'Tis well I have not told her the whole of my master's secrets; she'll blab that he visits this widow from Bath. But if they inquire, they'll be told he does not—The plot lies deeper than they are aware of, and so they will only get into a puzzle—hush!—yonder

comes my master and sir Brilliant—Let me get out of the way.—Here, Tom, help me to take away the things.
[*Exeunt.*]

Enter LOVEMORE and SIR BRILLIANT FASHION.

Love. Ha, ha!—my dear sir Brilliant—I must both pity and laugh at you—I'll swear thou art metamorphosed into the most whimsical being!

Sir Brill. Nay, pr'ythee, Lovemore, truce with your raillery—it is for sober advice that I apply to you—

Love. Sober advice!—ha, ha!—Thou art very far gone indeed.—Sober advice! There is no such thing as talking seriously and soberly to the tribe of lovers—That eternal absence of mind that possesses ye all—There is no society with you—I was damnable company myself, when I was one of the pining herd; but a dose of matrimony has brought me back again to myself; has cooled me pretty handsomely, I assure you;—Ay! and here comes repetatur haustus.

Re-enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady sends her compliments, and desires to know how you are this morning?

Love. O lord! my head aches wofully—it's the devil to be teased in this manner—What did you say, child?

Mus. My lady sent to know how you do, sir—

Love. O, right!—your lady—gave her my compliments, and I am very well: tell her—

Mus. She begs you won't think of going out without seeing her.

Love. There again now!—Tell her—tell her what you will—I shall be glad to see her—I'll wait on her—any thing—what you will.

Mus. I shall let my lady know, sir. [Exit.]

Love. My dear sir Brilliant, you see I am an example before your eyes—Put the widow Belmour entirely out of your head, and let my lord Etheridge—

Sir Brill. Positively no!—My pride is piqued; and if I can, my lord Etheridge shall find me a more formidable rival than he is aware of.

Re-enter WILLIAM.

Wil. Sir Bashful Constant is in his chariot at the upper end of the street, and has sent his servant to know if your honour is at home.

Love. By all means—I shall be glad to see sir Bashful. [*Exit William*] Now here comes another mortifying instance to deter you from all thoughts of marriage.

Sir Bril. Pshaw! hang him; he is no instance for me—a younger brother, who has lived in middling life, comes to an estate and a title on the death of a consumptive baronet, marries a woman of quality, and carries the primitive ideas of his narrow education into high life—Hang him!—he is no example for me.

Love. But he is a good deal improved since that time.

Sir Bril. Po! a mere Hottentot, unacquainted with life—blushes every moment, and looks suspicious, as if he imagined you have some design upon him.

Love. Why, I fancy I can explain that—I have found out a part of his character lately—You must know there is nothing he dreads so much as being an object of ridicule: and so, let the customs and fashions of the world be ever so absurd, he complies, lest he should be laughed at for being particular.

Sir Bril. And so, through the fear of being ridiculous, he becomes substantially so every moment.

Love. Just so.—And then to see him shrink back, as it were, from your observation, casting a jealous and fearful eye all around him. [*Mimics him.*]

Sir Bril. Ha, ha!—that's his way—but there is something worse in him—his behaviour to his lady—Ever quarrelling, and insulting her with nonsense about the dignity of a husband and his superior reason.

Love. Why, there again now; his fear of being ridiculous may be at the bottom of that.—I don't think he hates my lady Constant—She is a fine woman, and knows the world.—There is nothing mysterious in that part of his conduct.

Sir Bril. Mysterious! not to you—he is ever consulting you—you are in all his secrets.

Love. Yes; but I never can find any of them out. And yet there is something working within that he would fain tell me, and yet he is shy, and he hints and he hesitates, and then he returns again into himself, and ends just where he began.—Hark! I hear his chariot at the door.

Sir Bril. Why do you let him come after you?—he is a sad troublesome fellow, Lovemore.

Love. Nay, you are too severe—Come, he has fits of good nature.

Sir Bril. His wife has fits of good nature, you mean—How goes on your design there?

Love. Po, po! I have no design; but I take it you are a formidable man in that quarter.

Sir Bril. Who, I? Pshaw! no such thing.

Love. Never deny it to me—I know you have made advances.

Sir Bril. Why, faith, I pity my lady Constant, and cannot bear to see her treated as she is.

Love. Well, that's generous—have a care; I hear him—Sir Brilliant, I admire your amorous charity of all things—ha, ha!—Hush! here he comes.

Enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, a good morning to you—Sir Brilliant, your servant, sir.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, I am heartily glad to see you—I hope you left my lady well?

Sir Bash. I can't say, sir; I am not her physician.

Sir Bril. What a brute! [*Aside*] Well, Lovemore, I must be gone.

Love. Why in such a hurry?

Sir Bril. I must—I promised to call on a lady over the way—A relation of mine from Wiltshire—I shan't stay long.

Love. Very well—a l'honneur.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, your servant—Mr. Lovemore, yours.

[*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I am glad he is gone; for I have something to advise with you about.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have had another brush with my wife.

Love. I am sorry for it, sir Bashful—I am perfectly glad of it. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Ay! and pretty warm the quarrel was.—“Sir Bashful,” says she, “I wonder you will disgrace yourself at this rate—you know my pin-money is not sufficient—my mercer has been with me again—I can’t bear to be dunn’d at this rate:” and then she added something about her quality—you know, Mr. Lovemore, [*Smiling*] she is a woman of quality.

Love. Yes, and a fine woman too!

Sir Bash. No—no—no—Do you think she is a fine woman?

Love. Most certainly.—A very fine woman!

Sir Bash. [*Smiles*] Why, yes—I think she is what you may call a fine woman.—She keeps good company, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. The very best.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, that she does; your-tiptop; none else;—but one would not encourage her too much, for all that, Mr. Lovemore.—The world would think me but a weak man, if I did.

Love. The world will talk, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. So it will;—and so I answered her stoutly. “Madam,” says I, “a fig for your quality—don’t qualify me—I’ll act like a man of sense, madam; and I’ll be master in my own house, madam;—I have made a provision for the issue of our marriage in the settlement, madam; and I would have you to know that I am not obliged to pay for your cats, and your dogs, and your squirrels, and your monkeys, and your gaming debts.”

Love. How could you? That was too sharply said.

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, I gave it her—but for all that—[*Smiles*] I—I—I am—very good-natured at the bottom, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I dare say you are, sir Bashful—

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; but a man must keep up his own dignity—I'll tell you what I did—I went to the mercer's myself, and paid him the money. [*Smiles at him.*]

Love. Did you?

Sir Bash. I did: but then one would not let the world know that—No, no.

Love. By no means.

Sir Bash. It would make them think me too unorions.

Love. So it would!—I must encourage that notion of his.

Sir Bash. And so I told him: "Mr. Lutestring," says I, "mum's the word—there is your money; but let nobody know that I paid you silyly." [*Aside.*]

Love. Well, you have the handsomest way of doing a genteel thing——

Sir Bash. But that is not all I have to tell you.

Love. No!

Sir Bash. No—no—[*Smiles*] I have a deeper secret than that.

Love. Have ye?

Sir Bash. I have—may I trust you?

Love. O! upon my honour——

Sir Bash. Well, well! I know you are my friend—I know you are, and I have great confidence in you. Lookye, Mr. Lovemore, you must know——

Re-enter MUSLIN.

Mus. Sir, my lady desires to know if you will drink a dish of tea with her this morning?

Love. I desire I may not be teased in this manner—tell your mistress—go—go about your business——

[*Turns her out.*]

Sir Bash. Ay! I see he don't care a cherry-stone for his wife.

[*Aside.*]
Love. I hate this interruption—Well, sir Bashful——

Sir Bash. No; he does not care a pinch of snuff for her.

[*Aside.*]

Love. Well—proceed, sir Bashful——

Sir Bash. It does not signify, Mr. Lovemore; it's a foolish affair; I won't trouble you about it——

Love. Nay, that's unkind——

Sir Bash. Well, well! come, I will—Do you think Muslin did not overhear us?

Love. Not a syllable—Come, come, we are safe——

Sir Bash. Let me ask you a question first—Pray now have you any regard for your lady?

Love. The highest value for her.

Sir Bash. I repose it with you.—You must know, Mr. Lovemore—as I told you—I am at the bottom very good-natured; and though appearances may in some sort—[*Sir Brilliant Fashion rings without*] We are interrupted again.

Re-enter SIR BRILLIANT FASHION.

Sir Bril. Well, I have paid my visit, Lovemore.

Love. This is the most cross accident—[*Aside*] So, sir Brilliant!

Sir Bash. Ah!—I see there is no going on now—[*Aside*] Mr. Lovemore, I wish you a good day.

Love. Po! Pr'ythes—you shan't go.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; another time—Suppose you call at my house at one o'clock—nobody shall interrupt us there.

Love. With all my heart. [*Aside to Sir Bashful.*

Sir Bash. Do so then, do so—we'll be snug by ourselves. [*Aside to Lovemore*] Well, Mr. Lovemore, your servant, a good morning—Sir Brilliant, I kiss your hand.—You won't forget, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. Depend upon me.

Sir Bash. Very well——He is the only friend I have. [Exit.]

Love. Ha, ha!—you broke in upon us in the most critical moment—He was just going to communicate——

Sir Bril. I beg your pardon; I did not know——

Love. Nay, it's no matter; I shall get it out of him another time.

Re-enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady, sir, is quite impatient.

Love. Pshaw! for ever teasing!—I'll wait upon her presently.

[*Erit Muslin.*

Sir Bril. I'll step and entertain her while you dress—May I take that liberty, Lovemore?

Love. You know you may—no ceremony—how could you ask such a question?—apropos—But, sir Brilliant, first step one moment into my study—I want just one word with you.

Sir Bril. I attend you.

Love. This absurd sir Bashful! ha, ha! a ridiculous, unaccountable—ha, ha!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another Apartment.*

Mrs. Lovemore discovered, and a Maid attending her.

Mrs. L. This trash of tea!—I don't know why I drink so much of it.—Heigho!—I wonder what keeps Muslin—Do you step, child, and see if she is come back.

Maid. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. L. Surely never was any poor woman treated with such cruel indifference; nay, with such an open, undisguised insolence of gallantry.

Enter MUSLIN.

Well, Muslin, have you seen his prime minister?

Mus. Yes, ma'am, I have seen Mr. William; and he says as how my master came home according to custom, at five this morning, and in a huge pickle.—He is now in his study, and has sir Brilliant Fashion with him.

Mrs. L. Is he there again?

Mus. He is, ma'am; and as I came by the door, I heard them both laughing as loud as any thing.

Mrs. L. About some precious mischief, I'll be sworn; and all at my cost too!—Heigho!

Mus. Dear ma'am, why will you chagrin yourself about a vile man, that is not worth—no, as I live and breathe—not worth a single sigh?

Mrs. L. What can I do, Muslin?

Mus. Do, ma'am! Lard!—If I was as you, I'd do for him;—as I am a living Christian, I would.—If I could not cure my grief, I'd find some comforts; that's what I would.

Mrs. L. Heigho!—I have no comfort.

Mus. No comfort, ma'am?—Whose fault then?—Would any body but you, ma'am——It provokes me to think of it.—Would any body, ma'am, young and handsome as you are, with so many accomplishments, ma'am, sit at home here, as melancholy as a poor servant out of place?—And all this, for what?—Why, for a husband! and such a husband!—What do you think the world will say of you, ma'am, if you go on this way?

Mrs. L. I care not what they say—I am tired of the world, and the world may be tired of me, if it will:—My troubles are my own only, and I must endeavour to bear them.—Who knows what patience may do?—If Mr. Lovemore has any feeling left, my resignation may some day or other have its effect, and incline him to do me justice.

Mus. But, dear ma'am, that's waiting for dead men's shoes.—Incline him to do you justice!—What signifies expecting and expecting? Give me a bird in the hand.—Lard, ma'am, to be for ever pining and grieving!—Dear heart! If all the women in London, in your case, were to sit down and die of the spleen, what would become of all the public places?—They might turn Vauxhall to a hop-garden, make a brewhouse of Ranelagh, and let both the playhouses to a methodist preacher. We should not have the racketing with them we have now—"John, let the horses be put to—John, go to my lady Trumpabout's, and invite her to a small party of twenty or thirty card-tables.—John, run to my lady Catgut, and let her ladyship know I'll wait on her to the new opera.—John, run as fast as ever you can with my compliments to Mr. Spring, and tell him I shall take it as the greatest favour on earth, if he will let me have a side-box for the new play. No excuse, tell him. They whisk about the town, and rantipole it with as un-

concerned looks and as florid outsides as if they were treated at home like so many goddesses; though every body knows possession has ugoddessed them all long ago; and their husbands care no more for them—no, by jingo, no more than they do for their husbands.

Mrs. L. You run on at a strange rate.

Mus. [*In a Passion*] Dear ma'am, 'tis enough to make a body run on—If every body thought like you——

Mrs. L. If every body lov'd like me.

Mus. A brass thimble for love, if it is not answered by love.—What the deuce is here to do?—Shall I go and fix my heart upon a man that shall despise me for that very reason?—and, “Ay,” says he, “poor fool, I see she loves me—the woman's well enough, only she has one inconvenient circumstance about her: I'm married to her, and marriage is the devil.”——And then, when he's going a roguing, smiles impudently in your face, and, “My dear, divert yourself; I'm just going to kill half an hour at the chocolate-house, or to peep in at the play—your servant, my dear, your servant.”—Fie upon 'em!—I know 'em all.—Give me a husband that will enlarge the circle of my innocent pleasures—but a husband now-a-days, ma'am, is no such a thing.—A husband now—as I hope for mercy, is nothing at all but a scarecrow; to show you the fruit, but touch it if you dare.—A husband!—the devil take 'em all!—Lord forgive me for swearing—is nothing but a bugbear, a snap-dragon; a husband, ma'am, is——

Mrs. L. Pr'ythee, peace with your tongue, and see what keeps that girl.

Mus. Yes, ma'am—Why, Jenny! why don't you come up to my lady? What do you stand a gossiping there for?—A husband, ma'am, is a mere monster;—that is to say, if one makes him so, then for certain he is a monster indeed;—and if one does not make him so, then he behaves like a monster; and of the two evils, by my troth—Ma'am, was you ever at the play of *Catharine and Mercutio*?—The vile man calls his wife his goods, and his chattels, and his household stuff.—There you may see, ma'am, what a husband is—a hus-

band is——But here comes one will tell you——here comes sir Brilliant Fashion.—Ask his advice, ma'am.

Mrs. L. His advice? Ask advice of the man who has estranged Mr. Lovemore's affections from me?

Mus. Well, I protest and vow, ma'am, I think sir Brilliant a very pretty gentleman—he's the very pink of the fashion!—he dresses fashionably, lives fashionably, wins your money fashionably, loses his own fashionably, and does every thing fashionably: and then he is so lively, and talks so lively, and so much to say, and so never at a loss——But here he comes.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT FASHION, singing.

Sir Bril. Mrs. Lovemore, your most obedient very humble servant.—But, my dear madam, what always in a vis-a-vis party with your suivante?—You will afford me your pardon, my dear ma'am, if I avow that this does a little wear the appearance of misanthropy.

Mrs. L. Far from it, sir Brilliant—We were engaged in your panegyric.

Sir Bril. My panegyric!—Then I am come most apropos to give a helping hand towards making it complete.—Mr. Lovemore will kiss your hand presently, ma'am; he has not yet entirely adjusted his dress—In the mean time, I can, if you please, help you to some anecdotes, which will perhaps enable you to colour your canvass a little higher.

Mrs. L. I hope you will be sure, among those anecdotes—You may go, Muslin—not to omit the egregious exploit of seducing Mr. Lovemore entirely from his wife. [*She makes a Sign to Muslin to go.—Exit Muslin.*]

Sir Bril. I, ma'am?—Let me perish, ma'am——

Mrs. L. O, sir, I am no stranger to——

Sir Bril. May fortune eternally forsake me, and beauty frown on me, if ever——

Mrs. L. Don't protest too strongly, sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. May I never hold four by honours——

Mrs. L. O, sir, it is in vain to deny——

Sir Bril. Nay, but my dear Mrs. Lovemore, give me leave.—I alienate the affections of Mr. Lovemore?—

Consider, madam, how would this tell in Westminster Hall?—"Sir Brilliant Fashion, how say you? guilty of this indiotment or not guilty?"—"Not guilty, pos."—Thus issue is joined;—you enter the court, and in sober sadness charge the whole plump upon me, without a word as to the how, when, and where;—no proof positive—there ends the prosecution.

Mrs. L. But, sir, your stating of the case—

Sir Bril. Dear ma'am, don't interrupt—

Mrs. L. Let me explain this matter—

Sir Bril. Nay, Mrs. Lovemore, allow me fair play—I am now upon my defence.—"You will please to consider, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Lovemore is not a ward, nor I a guardian; that he is his own master to do as he pleases; that Mr. Lovemore is fond of gaiety, pleasure, and enjoyment; that he knows how to live, to make use of the senses nature has given him, and pluck the fruit that grows around him.—This is the whole affair.—How say ye, gentlemen of the jury?"—"Not guilty."—There, ma'am, you see, Not guilty.

Mrs. L. You run on finely, sir Brilliant;—but don't imagine that this bantering way—

Sir Bril. Acquitted by my country, ma'am, you see—fairly acquitted!

Mrs. L. After the very edifying counsel you give Mr. Lovemore, this loose strain of yours, sir Brilliant, is not at all surprising; and, sir, your late project—

Sir Bril. My late project!

Mrs. L. Yes, sir: not content with leading Mr. Lovemore into a thousand dissipations from all conjugal affection and domestic happiness, you have lately introduced him to your Mrs. Belmour—

Sir Bril. Ma'am, he does not so much as know Mrs. Belmour.

Mrs. L. Fie upon it, sir Brilliant!—falsehood is but a poor—

Sir Bril. Falsehood I disdain, ma'am—and I, sir Brilliant Fashion, declare that Mr. Lovemore, your husband, is not acquainted with the widow Belmour. You don't know that lady, ma'am; but I'll let you into

her whole history—her whole history, ma'am:—pray be seated—[*Brings Chairs down*] The widow Belmour is a lady of so agreeable a vivacity, that it is no wonder all the pretty fellows are on their knees to her.—Her manner so entertaining, such quickness of transition from one thing to another, and every thing she does, does so become her:—and then she has such a feeling heart, and such generosity of sentiment!—

Mrs. L. Mighty well, sir!—She is a very vestal—and a vestal from your school of painting must be very curious.—But give me leave, sir—How comes it that you desist from paying your addresses in that quarter?

Sir Bril. Why, faith, I find that my lord George Etheridge—who I thought was out of the kingdom—is the happy man: and so all that remains for me is to do justice to the lady, and console myself in the best manner I can for the insufficiency of my pretensions.

Mrs. L. And may I rely on this?

Sir Bril. May the first woman I put the question to, strike me to the centre with a supercilious eyebrow, if every syllable is not minutely true;—so that you see, ma'am, I am not the cause of your inquietude. There is not on earth a man that could be more averse from such a thing, nor a person in the world who more earnestly aspires to prove the tender esteem he bears ye.—[*She rises disconcerted*] You see, my dear ma'am, we both have cause of discontent; we are both disappointed—both crossed in love—and so, ma'am, the least we can do, is both heartily join to—

Love. [Within] William! is the chariot at the door?

Sir Bril. We are interrupted—There's my friend.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. Very well—let the chariot be brought round directly.—How do you do this morning, my dear? Sir Brilliant, I beg your pardon.—How do you do, my dear? [With an Air of cold Civility.]

Mrs. L. Only a little indisposed in mind, and indisposition of the mind is of no sort of consequence—not worth a cure,

Love. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Lovemore—Indisposition of the mind—Sir Brilliant, that is really a mighty pretty ring you have on your finger.

Sir Bril. A bauble—will you look at it?

Mrs. L. Though I have but few obligations to sir Brilliant, yet I fancy I may ascribe to him the favour of this visit, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. [*Looks at the Ring*] Nay, now positively you wrong me;—I was obliged to you for your civil inquiries concerning me this morning; and so, on my part, I came to return the compliment before I go abroad.—Upon my word, 'tis very prettily set.

[*Gives it to Sir Brilliant.*]

Mrs. L. Are you going abroad, sir?

Love. A matter of business—I hate business—but business must be done. [*Examines his Ruffles*] Pray is there any news?—any news, my dear?

Mrs. L. It would be news to me, sir, if you would be kind enough to let me know whether I may expect the favour of your company to dinner?

Love. It would be impertinent in me to answer such a question, because I can give no direct, positive answer to it;—as things happen—perhaps I may—perhaps may not.—But don't let me be of any inconvenience to you;—it is not material where a body eats.—Apropos—you have heard what happened? [*To Sir Brilliant.*]

Sir Bril. When and where?

Love. A word in your ear—Ma'am, with your permission—

Mrs. L. That cold, contemptuous civility, Mr. Lovemore—

Love. Pshaw! prythee now—How can you, my dear?—That's very peevish now, and ill-natured. It is but about a mere trifle—Harkye, [*Whispers*] I lost every thing I play'd for after you went—The foreigner and he understand one another.—I beg pardon, ma'am, it was only about an affair at the opera.

Mrs. L. The opera, Mr. Lovemore, or any thing, is more agreeable than my company.

Love. You wrong me now, I declare, you wrong

me;—and if it will give you any pleasure, I'll sup at home.—Can't we meet at the St. Alban's to-night?

[*Aside to Sir Brilliant.*

Mrs. L. I believe I need not tell you what pleasure that would give me: but unless the pleasure is mutual, Mr. Lovemore—

Love. Ma'am, I—I—I perceive all the delicacy of that sentiment; but—a—I shall incommode you;—you possibly may have some private party—and it would be very unpolite in me to obstruct your schemes of pleasure.—Would it not, sir Brilliant? [*Laughs.*

Sir Brill. It would be gothic to the last degree—Ha, ha!

Love. Ha, ha!—To be sure; for me to be of the party, would look as if we lived together like our friend sir Bashful Constant and his lady, who are for ever like two game cocks, ready armed to goad and wound one another most heartily—Ha, ha!

Sir Brill. The very thing—ha, ha!

Love. So it is—so it is! [*Both stand laughing.*

Mrs. L. Very well, gentlemen! you have it all to yourselves.

Love. Odso! [*Looking at his Watch*] I shall be beyond my time.—Any commands into the city, madam?

Mrs. L. Commands!—I have no commands, sir.

Love. I have an appointment there at my banker's.—Sir Brilliant, you know old Discount?

Sir Brill. What, be that was in parliament?

Love. The same.—Entire Butt, I think, was the name of the borough.—Ha, ha, ha!—Can I set you down any where, sir Brilliant?

Sir Brill. Can you give me a cast in St. James's-street?

Love. By all means—Allons—Mrs. Lovemore, your most obedient, ma'am.—Who waits there?—Mrs. Lovemore, no ceremony—your servant. [*Exit, singing.*

Sir Brill. Ma'am, you see I don't carry Mr. Lovemore abroad now—I have the honour, ma'am, to take my leave—I shall have her, I see plainly;—Sir Brilliant, mind your hits, and your business is done. [*Aside*] Ma'am, your most obedient. [*Exit.*

Re-enter MUSLIN, hastily.

Mus. Did you call, ma'am?

Mrs. L. To be insulted thus by his loose confident carriage!

Mus. As I live and breathe, ma'am, if I was as you, I would not flutter myself about it.

Mrs. L. About what?

Mus. La! what signifies mincing matters?—I overheard it all.

Mrs. L. You did!—did you?

[Angrily.]

Mus. Ma'am!

Mrs. L. It does not signify at present.

Mus. No, ma'am, it does not signify, and revenge is sweet I think; and by my troth, I don't see why you should stand on ceremony with a husband that stands upon none with you.

Mrs. L. Again!—Pr'ythee, Mrs. Malapert, none of your advice.—How dare you talk in this manner to me?—Let me hear no more of this impertinent freedom. *[Walking about.]*

Mus. No, ma'am.—It's very well, ma'am.—I have done, ma'am.—*[Disconcerted, and then she speaks aside]*—What the devil is here to do?—An unmannerly thing, to go for to huff me in this manner!

Mrs. L. *[Still walking about]* To make his character public, and render him the subject of every tea-table throughout this town, would only serve to widen the breach, and, instead of his neglect, might call forth his anger, and settle at last into a fixed aversion.—Lawyers, parting, and separate maintenance, would ensue.—No,—I must avoid that,—if possible I will avoid that.—What must be done?

Mus. What can she be thinking of now?—The sulky thing, not to be more familiar with such a friend as I am!—What can she mean? *[Aside]*—Did you speak to me, ma'am?

Mrs. L. Suppose I were to try that!—Muslin.

Mus. Ma'am!—Now for it—

Mrs. L. You heard sir Brilliant deny that Mr. Love-more visits at this widow Belmour's?

Mus. Lord, ma'am, he is as full of fibs as a French milliner,—he does visit there,—I know it all from William,—I'll be hanged in my own garters, if he does not.

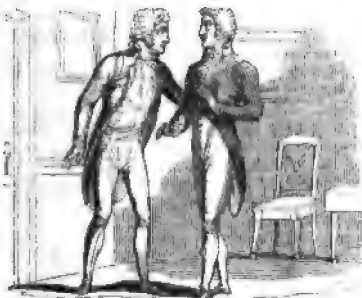
Mrs. L. I know not what to do!—Heigho!—Let my chair be got ready instantly.

Mus. Your chair, ma'am!—Are you going out, ma'am?

Mrs. L. Don't tease me with your talk, but do as I bid you,—and bring my cloak down to the parlour immediately.—Heigho! [Exit.

Mus. What is in the wind now?—An ill-natured puss, not to tell me what she is about.—It's no matter,—she does not know what she is about.—Before I'd lead such a life as she does, I'd take a lover's leap into Rosamond's pond. I love to see company for my part, and not to be mop'd to death here with her humdrum ways—tease, tease, tease—"Heigho! Muslin, go to William—where's his master?—when did he come home?—how long has he been up?—how does he do?" with the same thing over and over again, to the end of the chapter.—A fine life, indeed, for a person that has such fine spirits as I have by nature; it's enough to ruin my constitution. I love to see company, for my part.—Bless me! I had like to have forgot, there's that Mrs. Marmalet comes to my rout to-night.—I had as lieve she had stay'd away—She's nothing but mere lumber—so formal—she won't play above shilling whist: who the devil does she think is to make a shilling party for her? No such thing to be done now-a-days—nobody plays shilling whist now, unless I was to send for the tradespeople—but I shan't let myself down at that rate for madam Marmalet, I promise you. [Exit.

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT'S House.

Enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. [*Knocking heard*] Did not I hear a knock at the door?—Yes, yes, I did—the coach is just driving away.—Ay, ay, I am right enough—Sideboard! Sideboard!—Come hither, Sideboard!—I must know who it is.—My wife keeps the best company in England—but I must be cautious—servants love to peep into the bottom of their master's secrets.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Whose coach was that at the door just now?

Side. The duchess of Hurricane's, please your honour.

Sir Bash. The duchess of Hurricane's!—a woman of great rank.—The duchess of Hurricane, Sideboard? What did she want?

Side. I can't say, your honour—She left this card.

Sir Bash. A card!—Let me see it.—[*Reads*] *The duchess of Hurricane's compliments to lady Constant; she has left the rooks, and the country squires, and the crows, and the fox-hunters, and the hounds, to their own dear society for the rest of the winter; and lets her*

ladyship know, that she sees company at Hurricane-house, on Wednesdays, for the remainder of the season. Make me thankful! Here's a card from a duchess! [Aside] What have you in your hand?

Side. Cards that have been left here all this morning, your honour.

Sir Bash. All the morning!—Why, I may as well—may as well keep the Coach and Horses in Piccadilly—I won't bear this, Sideboard; I can't bear it—*[Aside]* Ha, ha, ha!—Let me see,—let me see!

Side. There, your honour. *[Gives the Cards.]*

Sir Bash. What! all these this morning, Sideboard?

Side. Yes, please your honour.

Sir Bash. This is too much, Sideboard—it is too much indeed!—Ha, ha, ha! *[Aside]* I can't bear it, Sideboard!—No, no,—I cannot bear it.—Ha, ha, ha! *[Aside]* Make me thankful! All people of tiptop condition to visit my wife. Ha, ha, ha. *[Aside.]*

Enter FURNISH.

What's the matter, Furnish?

Fur. Nothing, sir; nothing's the matter.

Sir Bash. What are you about? Where are you going? What have you to do now?

Fur. To do, sir?—Only to tell the chairmen they must go out with the chair this evening, and black George with a flambeau before them, to pay some visits, that's all.

Sir Bash. What polite ways people of fashion have of being intimate with one another!—An empty chair to return visits for her!—I can't help laughing at it.—Ha, ha, ha!—I like to see her do like other people. *[Aside]* But I shall be found out by my servants—I tell you, Sideboard, and I tell you too, Mrs. Impertinence, that my lady leads a life of folly, and noise, and hurry, and cards, and dice, and absurdity, and nonsense; and I won't bear it—I am resolv'd I will not.—I think I hear her coming! I do—I do.—I will not go on this way! and now, I'll tell her roundly a piece of my mind.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

She looks charmingly to-day! [*Aside*] So, my lady Constant—I have had my house full of duns again to-day.

Lady C. Obliging creatures to call so often!—What did they want?

Sir Bash. What did they want!—They wanted their money.

Lady C. Well, and you paid them—did not you?

Sir Bash. I pay them!—'Sdeath, madam! what do you take me for?

Lady C. I took you for a husband, but I find I was mistaken.

Sir Bash. Death and fire!—I see you're an ungrateful woman—I am sure, my lady Constant, I have behav'd with great good nature to you.—Did not I go into parliament, madam, to please you?—Did not I go and get drunk at a borough for a month together; ay, and mobbed at the George and Vulture, and pelted and horse-whipp'd the day before election,—and all this to please you?—Did not I stand up in the house to make a speech merely to gratify your pride?—And did not I expose myself there?—Did I know whether I stood upon my head or my heels?—What the devil had I to do in parliament? What's my country to me?

Lady C. Who mentioned your country, sir?

Sir Bash. I desire you won't mention it—I have nothing to do with it.—No, nor with your debts—I have nothing to do with them; and I desire you will tell your people to come no more after me.—I know how to prevent that—notice in the Gazette will exempt me from your extravagancies.—I did not live in the Temple for nothing!

Fur. I protest I never heard any body talk so mean in all my days before.

Lady C. Don't you be so pert, pray.—Leave the room—go both of you down stairs.

[*Exeunt Furnish and Sideboard.*]

Sir Bash. I have kept it up pretty well before my servants. She's a fine woman, and talks admirably! [*Aside.*]

Lady C. Is there never to be an end of this usage,

sir Bashful?—Am I to be for ever made unhappy by your humours?

Sir Bash. Humours!—I like that expression prodigiously!—Humours indeed!

Lady C. You may harp upon the word, sir.—Humours you have, sir, and such as are become insupportable.

Sir Bash. She talks like an angel! [*Aside*] Madam, [*Moderating his Voice*] I should have no humours, as you call them, if your extravagancies were not insupportable.—What would the world say?—Let us canvass the matter quietly and easily—what would the world think of my understanding, if I was seen to encourage your way of life?

Lady C. What will they think of it now, sir?—Take this along with you, there is a certain set of people who, when they would avoid an error, are sure to fall into the opposite extreme.

Sir Bash. There's for you!—That's a translation from Horace—*Dum vitant stulti vitia*.—Oh, she is a notable woman! [*Aside.*]

Lady C. Let me tell you, sir Bashful, there is not in the world a more ridiculous sight, than a person wrapping up himself in imaginary wisdom—if he can but guard against one giant-vice, while he becomes an easy prey to a thousand other absurdities.

Sir Bash. Lord, I am nothing at all to her in an argument! she has a tongue that can reason me out of my senses—I could almost find in my heart to tell her the whole truth. [*Aside*]—Lookye, madam, you know I am good-natur'd at the bottom, and any thing in reason——

Lady C. When did I desire any thing else?—Is it unreasonable to live with decency?—Is it unreasonable to keep the company I have always been us'd to?—Is it unreasonable to conform to the modes of life, when our own fortune can so well afford it?——

Sir Bash. She's a very reasonable woman, and I wish I had but half her sense! [*Aside*]—I'll tell you what, my lady Constant, to avoid eternal disputes, if a sum of money, within moderate compass, would make nat-

ters easy—I know you have contracted habits in life—and I know the force of habit is not easily conquer'd.—I would not have her conquer it: my pride would be hurt if she did. [*Aside*]—And so, madam, if a brace of hundreds—why should not I give her three hundred? [*Aside*] I did not care if I went as far as three hundred—if three hundred pounds, my lady Constant, will settle the matter—why, as to the matter of three hundred pounds——

Re-enter FURNISH, with a Bandbox.

Fur. Your ladyship's things are come home from the milliner's. [*Showing the Bandbox.*]

Sir Bash. Zookers! this woman has overheard me! [*Aside*] As to the matter of three hundred pounds, madam, [*Loud, in a Passion*] let me tell you it is a very large sum—ask me for three hundred pounds, madam!—Do you take me for a blockhead?

Lady C. What does the man fly out so for?

Sir Bash. What right have you to three hundred pounds? I will allow no such doings—is not my house an eternal scene of your routs, and your drums, and your what-d'ye-call-'ems?—Don't I often come home when the hall is barricado'd with powder-monkey servants, that I can hardly get within my own doors?

Lady C. What is the meaning of all this, sir?

Sir Bash. Have not I seen you at a game at loo put the fee-simple of a score of my best acres upon a single card?—And have not I mutter'd to myself—If that woman now were as much in love with me, as she is with Pam, what an excellent wife she would make?

Lady C. Yes, I have great reason to love you, truly!

Sir Bash. Death and fire!—You are so fond of play, that I should not wonder to see my child resemble one of the court cards, or mark'd in the forehead with a pair-royal of aces. I tell you, once for all, you are an ungovernable woman—your imaginations are as wild as any woman's in Bedlam.—Do go thither, go; for I tell you, once for all, I'll allow no such doings in my house. [*Exit.*]

Lady C. His head is certainly turn'd!—Did any body ever see such behaviour?

Fur. See it!—no, nor bear it neither.—Your ladyship will never be rightly at ease, I'm afraid, till you part with him.

Lady C. Oh, never; it is impossible!—He not only has lost all decency, but seems to me to have bid adieu to all humanity.—That it should be my fate to be married to such a quicksand! But I'll think no more of him.

Fur. Oh, madam, I had quite forgot; Mrs. Lovemore's servant is below, and desires to know if your ladyship would be at home this morning.

Lady C. Yes, I shall be at home.—Step with me to my room, and I'll give you a card to send Mrs. Lovemore.—Of all things let a woman be careful how she marries a narrow-minded, under-bred husband. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT, with LOVEMORE.

Sir Bash. Walk in, Mr. Lovemore, walk in!—I am heartily glad to see you!—This is kind.

Love. I am ready, you see, to attend the call of friendship.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, you are a friend indeed.

Love. You do me honour, sir Bashful.—Pray how does my lady?

Sir Bash. Perfectly well!—I never saw her look better.—We have had t'other skirmish since I saw you.

Love. Another?

Sir Bash. Ay, another!—and I did not bate her an ace.—But I told you I had something for your private ear—Pray now, have you remark'd any thing odd or singular in me?

Love. Not the least—I never knew a man with less oddity in my life.

Sir Bash. What, nothing at all? He, he! [*Smiles at him*] Have you remark'd nothing about my wife?

Love. You don't live happy with her—but that is not singular.

Sir Bash. Po!—I tell you, Mr. Lovemore, I am at the bottom a very odd fellow.

Love. Not at all.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, yes,—I am—I am indeed—as odd a fish as lives—and you must have seen it before now.

Love. Not I, truly! You are not jealous, I hope?

Sir Bash. You have not hit the right nail o'the head—no—no—not jealous. Do her justice, I am secure there—my lady has high notions of honour. It is not that.

Love. What then?

Sir Bash. Can't you guess?

Love. Not I, upon my soul!—Explain.

Sir Bash. He, he! [*Smiling and looking simple*] You could never have imagined it—I blush at the very thoughts of it.

[*Turns away.*]

Love. Come, come, be a man, sir Bashful—out with it at once, let me be of your council—

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore I doubt you, and yet esteem you.—Some men there are, who when a confidence is once repos'd in them, take occasion from thence to hold a hank over their friend, and tyrannise him all the rest of his days.

Love. O fie!—This is ungenerous!—True friendship is of another quality—it feels from sympathy, and is guarded by honour.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I have no further doubt of you—and so—Stay, stay a moment—let me just step to the door.

[*Goes on tiptoe.*]

Love. Jealousy has laid hold of him.

[*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Servants have a way of listening.

[*Pushes the Door open with both Hands and goes in.*]

Love. He has it through his very brain!

[*Aside.*]

Re-enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. No, no—all's safe—there was nobody. Mr. Lovemore, I will make you the depository—the faithful depository of a secret, which to you will appear a mystery. My inclinations, Mr. Lovemore—nay, but you'll laugh at me.

Love. No—upon my honour!—No, no.

Sir Bash. Well, well, well.—My inclinations, I say, are changed—no, not changed—but—they are not what

they have appeared to be—I am in love. 'Sdeath, I am quite ashamed of myself.

Love. Asham'd! Love is a noble passion. But don't tell me any more about it—my lady Constant will find it out, and lay the blame to me—I must not appear to encourage you—no, no—you must not involve me in a quarrel with her.

Sir Bash. Pshaw!—you don't take me right—quite wide of the mark—hear me out.

Love. I won't—indeed, I won't!—

Sir Bash. Nay, but you shall, you shall—

Love. Positively no!—Let me keep clear.—She shall certainly know it, and the devil's in the dice if she does not comply with my desires from mere spirit of revenge.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. I tell you, Mr. Lovemore—the object of my passion—[*Leading him back*] this charming woman, on whom I dote to distraction—

Love. I don't desire to know it.

Sir Bash. You must, you must; this adorable creature—

Love. Keep it to yourself, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Who looks so lovely in my eyes—is—

Love. I don't desire to know.

Sir Bash. But you shall know—is—this fine woman, is—my own wife.

Love. Your own wife?

[*Stares at him.*

Sir Bash. [*Looks silly, blushes, and turns away from him*] Yes, my own wife.

Love. This is the most unexpected discovery—

Sir Bash. [*Fidling and biting his Nails*] Look ye there now—he laughs at me already!

[*Aside.*

Love. And can this be possible?—Are you really in love with my lady Constant?—your own wife!

Sir Bash. Spare my confusion, Mr. Lovemore; spare my confusion.—Ay, it's all over with me.

Love. I should never have guess'd this, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I have made myself very ridiculous, Mr. Lovemore: [*Looks at him and drops his Eyes*] I know I have.

Love. Ridiculous!—far from it—Why, do you think it ridiculous to love a valuable woman? Po, po!—cheer up, man—and now to keep you in countenance I'll deposit a secret with you—I love my wife.

Sir Bash. What!

Love. I am in love with my wife.

Sir Bash. He, he! [*Looks at him with great glee*] Ha, ha!—no, no—you don't love her!—Ha, ha!—Do you, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. Upon my honour!

Sir Bash. What, love your wife?

Love. Most ardently!

Sir Bash. Give me your hand—Give me your hand! He, he, he!—I am glad to know this!

Love. I love her most sincerely—But then I never let her know it—no—nor I would not have the world know it, and therefore I have led the life I have done on purpose to conceal it.

Sir Bash. You are right, Mr. Lovemore—perfectly right—I have quarrelled with my lady on purpose to cloak the affair, and prevent all suspicion.

Love. That was right; you should keep to that.

Sir Bash. So I intend—but I have done a thousand kindnesses in the mean time.

Love. Have ye?

Sir Bash. Ay, a thousand—She has been plaguing me this long time for a diamond cross, and diamond shoe-buckles—"Madam," says I, "I'll bear of no such trumpery"—But then goes me I, and bespeaks them directly of the best jeweller in town, will come to three hundred—She'll have 'em this day, without knowing where they come from.

Love. Sly, sly. He, he!

Sir Bash. Let me alone; I know what I'm about—And then, Mr. Lovemore, to cover this design—Ha, ha! I can take occasion to be as jealous as Bedlam, when I see her wear all her diamond baubles.

Love. So you can—I wish he may never be jealous of me in earnest.

Sir Bash. Well, well—give us your hand—give us

[*Aside.*]

your hand—my dear brother sufferer—I'll tell you what, Mr. Lovemore—we can, in a sly way, do each other great service, if you will come into my scheme.

Love. As how, pray?

Sir Bash. I'll tell you—There are some things which you know our wives expect to be done——

Love. What is he at now? [*Aside*] So they do, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Now, if you will assist me——

Love. You may depend upon my assistance.

Sir Bash. Lookye, Mr. Lovemore, my lady Constant wants money—You know she keeps a great deal of company, and makes a great figure there—I could show my wife, Mr. Lovemore, in any company in England; I wish she could say the same of me.

Love. Why truly, I wish she could.

Sir Bash. But I had not those early advantages—Now you know I can't in reason be seen to give her money myself, so I would have you take the money of me, and pretend to lend it to her yourself, out of friendship and regard.

Love. Why you're a very Machiavel—nothing was ever better contrived—Here's a fellow pimping for his own horns. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Here, here, here—take the money—here it is in bank notes,—One, two, three—there's three hundred pounds—give her that—give her that, Mr. Lovemore——

Love. I will—This is the rarest adventure! [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. I'll do any thing for your wife in return—

Love. Why I may have occasion for your friendship, sir Bashful—that is to forgive me if ever you find me out. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. You may always command me—well, lose no time, she's above stairs—Step to her now, and make her easy.

Love. I'll do my endeavour, that you may rely upon—I'll make her easy, if possible.

Sir Bash. That's kind, that's kind!—Well, ha, ha, ha! Mr. Lovemore, is not this a rare scheme? Ha, ha, ha!

Love. 'Tis the newest way of making a wife easy—
Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, let this head of mine alone.—Ha, ha!

Love. That I won't, if I can help it. [Exit.]

Sir Bash. Prosper you, prosper you, Mr. Lovemore!
It is the luckiest thing in the world to have so good a friend! make me thankful!—he is a true friend. [*Sir Bril. speaks without*] Hist—Did not I hear a noise?—Is not that sir Brilliant's voice?—I hope they won't let him in—I gave orders I would not be at home—Zookers! they are letting him in—He shan't see my lady for all that—Shan't interrupt business.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT FASHION.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, I kiss your hand; I rejoice to see you. And my lady, how does she do? Is she at home?

Sir Bash. Do you think I have nothing to do but to know whether she is at home or not? I don't trouble my head about her, sir.

Sir Bril. Po! never talk so slightly of so agreeable a woman—My lady Constant has spirit, taste, sense, wit, beauty—

Sir Bash. Spirit, taste, sense, wit, beauty!—She has all that, sure enough. [*Aside*] Sir, I am no sworn appraiser to take an inventory of her effects, and set a just value upon them—I don't know what she has.

Sir Bril. Is her ladyship visible this morning?

Sir Bash. No, sir, she is invisible this morning—and unintelligible this morning—and incomprehensible this morning—She is not well—she has the vapours—She can't be spoke to—

Sir Bril. I'm sorry for it—I came to tell her the rarest piece of news—such a discovery!—

Sir Bash. Ay, what's that?

Sir Bril. You know sir Amorous La Fool?

Sir Bash. Mightily well.

Sir Bril. Poor devil! he has got into such a scrape!

Sir Bash. What's the matter? Has he been bubbled at play?

Sir Bril. Worse, much worse.

Sir Bash. He is not dead?

Sir Bril. Why that's a scrape indeed!—But it is not that; almost as bad though.

Sir Bash. He's fall'n in love with some coquette, may be?

Sir Bril. No.

Sir Bash. With some prude?

Sir Bril. Nor that.

Sir Bash. An actress, may be; or an opera singer?

Sir Bril. No you'll never guess—Like a silly devil, he has fallen in love with his own wife. Ha, ha!

Sir Bash. In love with his own wife! [*Stares at him.*]

Sir Bril. Ha, ha!—In love with his own wife—I heard it at my lady Betty Scandal's—there was such laughing, and so much raillery—my dear sir Bashful, don't you enjoy it? Ha, ha! It's so ridiculous an affair—Is it not, sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Ha, ha!—Oh, ay, very ridiculous indeed! Ha, ha!—nothing can be more pleasant!—Zoons! it's my own case directly! [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. The man is lost, abandon'd, ruin'd, dead, and buried—You don't laugh, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Who, I?—I—I—I—I laugh as heartily as I possibly can.

Sir Bril. I want to find Lovemore; he'll be so diverted. You know he does not care a pinch of snuff for his wife.

Sir Bash. No, not in the least, he does not care for her—no, to be sure he does not. [*Aside.*] Not he; he no more cares for his wife than I do for mine.

Sir Bril. Much the same. Poor sir Amorous! what a ridiculous figure does he make at last—adieu for him all the joys of life! the side-box whisper, the soft assignation, and the joys of freedom!—He is retired with his Penelope, to love most heartily for a month, grow indifferent to each other in two, and hate most cordially in three—Poor devil! Ha, ha!

Sir Bash. Do you think it will end so?

Sir Bril. Most certainly. But I have not told you the worst of his case—Our friend, sir Charles Wildfire,

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KEEP HIM.

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you know, was about a comedy—now what has been done, but drawn the character of sir Amorous La Fool and made him the hero of his piece.

Sir Bash. What! put him into a comedy?

Sir Bril. Ha, ha!—Yes, he has—It is call'd, "The Amorous Husband; or, the Man in Love with his own Wife."—I must send in time for places—Sir Bashful you shall be of the party.

Sir Bash. With great pleasure—You may be sure I will be a very agreeable party to me—You may depend on—I shall enjoy the joke prodigiously.

Sir Bril. It will be the highest scene in nature—well a good day!—I must drive to a thousand places and put it about—farewell! Apropos, be sure you let my lady know—It will appear to her so ridiculous—

Sir Bash. Do you think it will?

Sir Bril. Certainly!—Well, your servant, your servant, your servant—Poor sir Amorous La Fool, he'll have his horns added to his coat of arms in a very little time. [Exit]

Sir Bash. Ha, ha! I see how it is; I shall get lampooned, be rhymed, and niched into a comedy.—Make me thankful! nobody knows of my affair but Mr. Lovemore—He can't discover against me for his own sake—

Re-enter LOVEMORE.

Well, Mr. Lovemore, well; how have you manag'd? Love. Just as I could wish—She is infinitely obliging to me, and will never forget this civility.

Sir Bash. Ten thousand thanks to you!—She suspects nothing of my being privy to it?

Love. Not the least inkling of it.—She talk'd at something about delicacy; and thought it rather indecorum to accept money even from a friend—that argument was soon silenced—I told her I could not but see that a bad husband you were.

Sir Bash. When I was right, that was right! Love. Yes, I received a few sentences to her that the civility confers the sure of wheedling you, in good-nature to repay me—It was but a

you my banker for a short time: and with more jargon to that purpose. And so, with some reluctance, she comply'd, and things are upon the footing I would have them.—Death and fury! there's my wife!

Sir Bash. Ay, and here comes my wife too.

Love. What the devil brings her here? [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. This is the rarest circumstance—Now let me see how he will carry it before Mrs. Lovemore. Walk in, walk in, Mrs. Lovemore.

Re-enters LADY CONSTANT, with MRS. LOVEMORE.

Lady C. Mrs. Lovemore, I'm glad to see you abroad, madam.

Mrs. L. I am highly fortunate in meeting your ladyship at home.—Mr. Lovemore, I am glad to see you too, sir.

Love. Mrs. Lovemore, I thank you.

Sir Bash. Mind him now—mind him now—My lady Constant seems quite pleas'd—She has got the money.

[*Aside.*

Mrs. L. I thought you were gone into the city, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. Why will you mind me, Mrs. Lovemore.—I deferred going till evening.—What the devil business had she here?

[*Aside.*

Mrs. L. Then I may hope you'll dine at home, sir?

Love. O Lord! how can you tease a man so?

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, I see how it is—he won't let her have the least suspicion of his regard.

[*Aside.*

Lady C. No doubt Mr. Lovemore will dine at home, if it gives you any satisfaction—And sir Bashful, I reckon, will dine at home for the contrary reason.

Sir Bash. Madam, I'll dine at home, or I'll dine abroad, for what reason I please: I am my own master, I hope, madam.—Lovemore, Lovemore! Ha, ha!

[*Aside.*

Love. Bravo!—What a silly blockhead it is! [*Aside.*

Mrs. L. I see your chariot at the door, Mr. Lovemore, —I'll send away my chair, and you may set me down.

Love. Ma'am, I have several places to call at.

Sir Bash. Cunning! cunning!—He would not be seen in a chariot with her for the world.

[*Aside.*

Lady C. I am to have a rout to-morrow evening, Mrs. Lovemore: I wish you would favour us with your company.

Sir Bash. A rout to-morrow evening!—You have a rout every evening, I think. I wish, madam you would learn to imitate Mrs. Lovemore, and not make a fool of me as you do.—Hip, Lovemore! Ha, ha! [*Aside.*

Love. Ha, ha! Bravo!—Well, I must be gone—My lady Constant, I have the honour to wish your ladyship a good morning. Ma'am, your most obedient; sir Bashful, yours—Madam, you know I am yours.

[*Bows gravely to Mrs. Lovemore, and exit.*

Sir Bash. He carries it off finely—Make me thankful! I have kept my own secret too, and she shall never know a word of the matter. [*Aside*] Mrs. Lovemore, your humble servant, madam!—Madam, you know I am yours. [*Bows gravely to Lady Constant, and exit.*

Mrs. L. Two such husbands!

Lady C. As to my swain, Mrs. Lovemore, I grant you—but you may set your mind at rest; Mr. Lovemore is at least well bred; whereas sir Bashful never qualifies his disrespect with the least tincture of civility.

Mrs. L. Well, if there is any pleasure in being made miserable with civility, I must allow Mr. Lovemore a most skilful hand.—I have found out another of his intrigues, and I came on purpose to consult with your ladyship about it: there is a widow Belmour, to whom he pays his addresses.

Lady C. The widow Belmour!—

Mrs. L. But first give me leave, lady Constant, to tell you the whole circumstances of the affair.

Lady C. All scandal, take my word for it.—But if I must hear your story, let us adjourn the debate to my dressing-room, and I will promise to confute your whole accusation.—My dear Mrs. Lovemore, are you not tending a little towards jealousy?—Beware of that, ma'am; you must not look through that medium;

That jaundice of the mind, whose colours strike
On friend and foe, and paint them all alike.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE 'THIRD.



SCENE I. *A Room at the WIDOW BELMOUR's, in which are disposed up and down several Chairs, a Toilet, a Bookcase, and a Harpsichord; MIGNIONET, her Maid, is settling the Toilet.*

Mig. I don't well know what to make of this same lord Etheridge—he is coming here again to-day, I suppose; all this neatness and all this care must be for him. Well, it does not signify, there is a pleasure in obeying madam Belmour—she is a sweet lady, that's the truth of it. 'Twere a pity any of these men, with their deceitful arts, should draw her into a snare—But she knows them all—They must rise early who can outwit her.

Enter MRS. BELMOUR, reading a Volume of Pope.

*Oh! bless'd with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to day;
She who can own a sister's charms, and hear
Sighs for a daughter, with unwounded ear;
That never answers till a husband cools,
And if she rules him, never shows she rules:*

Sensible, elegant Pope!

*Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most when she obeys.*

[Seems to read on.]

Mig. Lord love my mistress! She's always so happy and so gay.

Mrs. B. These charming characters of women!—'Tis like a painter's gallery, where one sees the portraits of all one's acquaintance, and sometimes sees one's own likeness too.—Here, Mignionet, put this book in its place.

Mig. Yes, ma'am.—There, ma'am, you see your toilet looks most charmingly.

Mrs. B. Does it?—I think it does.—Apropos—Where's my new song?—Here it lies—I must make myself mistress of it.—Mignionet, do you know that this is a very pretty song—'tis written by my lord Etheridge;—I positively must learn it before he comes. [Sings a Line] Do you know, Mignionet, that I think my lord not wholly intolerable?

Mig. Yes, ma'am, I know that.

Mrs. B. Do you?

Mig. And if I have any skill, ma'am, I fancy you think him more than tolerable.

Mrs. B. Really! then you think I like him, I suppose?—Do ye think I like him?—I don't well know how that is—and yet I don't know but I do like him;—no—no—I don't like him neither, not absolutely like—but I could like, if I had a mind to humour myself.—The man has a softness of manner, an elegant turn of thinking, and has a heart—has he a heart?—yes, I think he has;—and then he is such an observer of the manners, and shows the ridiculous of them with so much humour.

Mig. Without doubt, ma'am, my lord is a pretty man enough; but lack-a-day, what o'that?—You know but very little of him—your acquaintance is but very short—[Mrs. Belmour hums a Tune] Do pray, my dear madam, mind what I say—for I am at times, I assure you, very speculative—very speculative indeed;

and I see very plainly—Lord, ma'am, what am I doing?—I am talking to you for your own good, and you are all in the air, and no more mind me, no, no more than if I was nothing at all.

Mrs. B. [*Hums a Tune still*] Why indeed you talk wonderfully well upon the subject.—Do you think I shall play the fool, Mignonet, and marry my lord?

Mig. You have it, ma'am, through the very heart of you—I see that.

Mrs. B. Do you think so?—May be I may marry, and may be not.—Poor sir Brilliant Fashion!—what will become of him?—But I won't think about it.

Enter POMPEY.

What's the matter, Pompey?

Pom. There's a lady below in a chair, that desires to know if you are at home, madam?

Mrs. B. Has the lady no name?

Pom. She did not tell her name.

Mrs. B. How awkward you are!—Well, show her up.

[*Exit Pompey.*]

Mig. Had not you better receive the lady in the drawing-room, ma'am?—Things here are in such a confusion—

Mrs. B. No, it will do very well here. I dare say it is somebody I am intimate with, though the fool does not recollect her name.—Here she comes.—No, I don't know her.

Enter MRS. LOVEMORE.—They both look with a grave Surprise at each other, then courtesy with an Air of distant Civility.

Ma'am, your most obedient. [*With a kind of Reserve.*]

Mrs. L. Ma'am, I beg your pardon for this intrusion.

[*Disconcerted.*]

Mrs. B. Pray, ma'am, walk in—Won't you please to be seated?—Mignonet, reach a chair.

[*Mrs. Lovemore crosses the Stage, and they salute each other.*]

Mrs. L. I am afraid this visit, from one unknown to you, will be inconvenient and troublesome.

Mrs. B. Not at all, I dare say;—you need not be at the trouble of an apology.—Mignonnet, you may withdraw. *[Exit Mignonnet.]*

Mrs. L. Though I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, ma'am, there is a particular circumstance which has determined me to take this liberty with you; for which I entreat your pardon.

Mrs. B. The request is wholly unnecessary;—but a particular circumstance, you say—

Mrs. L. I shall appear perhaps very ridiculous, and indeed I am afraid I have done the most absurd thing—But, ma'am, from the character you bear for tenderness of disposition and generosity of sentiment, I easily incline to flatter myself, you will not take offence at any thing; and that, if it is in your power, you will afford me your assistance.

Mrs. B. You may depend upon me.

Mrs. L. I will be very ingenuous:—Pray, ma'am, an't you acquainted with a gentleman whose name is Lovemore?

Mrs. B. Lovemore!—No;—no such person in my list.—Lovemore!—I don't know him, ma'am.

Mrs. L. Ma'am, I beg your pardon—I won't trouble you any further. *[Going.]*

Mrs. B. 'Tis mighty odd, this—*[Aside]* Madam, I must own my curiosity is a good deal excited—*[Takes her by the Hand]* Pray, ma'am, give me leave—I beg you will sit down—pray don't think me impertinent—may I beg to know who the gentleman is?

Mrs. L. You have such an air of frankness and generosity, that I will open myself to you.—I have been married to him these two years; I admired my husband for his understanding, his sentiment, and his spirit; I thought myself as sincerely loved by him as my fond heart could wish; but there is of late such a strange revolution in his temper, I know not what to make of it:—instead of the looks of affection and expressions of tenderness with which he used to meet me, 'tis no-

thing now but cold, averted, superficial civility.—While abroad, he runs on in a wild career of pleasure; and, to my deep affliction, has fix'd his affections upon another object.

Mrs. B. If you mean to consult with me in regard to this case, I am afraid you have made a wrong choice;—there is something in her appearance that affects me—[*Aside*] Pray excuse me, ma'am, you consider this matter too deeply—Men will prove false, and if there is nothing in your complaint but mere gallantry on his side—upon my word, I can't think your case the worse for that.

Mrs. L. Not the worse!—

Mrs. B. On the contrary, much better. If his affections, instead of being alienated, had been extinguished, he would have sunk into a downright stupid, habitual insensibility; from which it might prove impossible to recall him.—In all love's bill of mortality, there is not a more fatal disorder.—

Mrs. L. I am afraid, ma'am, he is too much the reverse of this, too susceptible of impressions from every beautiful object.

Mrs. B. Why, so much the better, as I told you already;—some new idea has struck his fancy, and he will be for awhile under the influence of that.

Mrs. L. How light she makes of it! [*Aside.*

Mrs. B. But it is the wife's business to bait the hook for her husband with variety; and to draw him daily to herself:—that is the whole affair, I would not make myself uneasy, ma'am.

Mrs. L. Not uneasy! when his indifference does not diminish my regard for him!—Not uneasy! when the man I dote on no longer fixes his happiness at home!

Mrs. B. Ma'am, you'll give me leave to speak my mind freely.—I have often observed, when the fiend jealousy is rous'd, that women lay out a wonderful deal of anxiety and vexation to no account; when perhaps, if the truth were known, they should be angry with themselves instead of their husbands.

Mrs. L. Angry with myself, madam!—Calumny can

lay nothing to my charge—the virtue of my conduct, madam——

[Rises.

Mrs. B. Oh, I would have laid my life you would be at that work—that's the folly of us all.—But virtue is out of the question at present. It is la belle nature—nature embellished by the advantages of art, that the men expect now-a-days;—and really, ma'am, without compliment, you seem to have all the qualities that can dispute your husband's heart with any body; but the exertion of those qualities, I am afraid, is suppressed.—You'll excuse my freedom, I have been married, ma'am, and am a little in the secret.—It is much more difficult to keep a heart than win one.—After the fatal words, "For better for worse," the general way with wives is, to relax into indolence, and while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think that is enough:—but they are mistaken; there is a great deal wanting—an address, a manner, a desire of pleasing——

Mrs. L. But when the natural temper——

Mrs. B. The natural temper must be forced—Home must be made a place of pleasure to the husband, and the wife must throw infinite variety into her manner. And this I take to be the whole mystery, the way to keep a man.—But I run on at a strange rate—Well, to be sure, I'm the giddiest creature.—Ma'am, will you now give me leave to inquire how I came to have this favour?—Who recommended me to your notice?—And pray, who was so kind as to intimate that I was acquainted with Mr. Lovemore?

Mrs. L. I beg your pardon for all the trouble I have given you, and I assure you 'tis entirely owing to my being told that his visits were frequent here.

Mrs. B. His visits frequent here!—They have imposed upon you, I assure you—and they have told you, perhaps, that I have robbed you of Mr. Lovemore's heart?—Scandal is always buzzing about; but I assure you I have not meddled with his heart—O lud! I hear a rap at the door—I positively won't be at home.

Re-enter MIGNIONET.

Mig. Did you call, madam?

Mrs. B. I am not at home.

Mig. 'Tis lord Etheridge, ma'am—he's coming up stairs; the servants told him you were within.

Mrs. B. Was ever any thing so cross? Tell him there is company with me, and he won't come in.—Mignionet, run to him.

Mrs. L. Ma'am, I beg I mayn't hinder you.

Mrs. B. Our conversation begins to grow interesting, and I would not have you go for the world.—I won't see my lord.

Mrs. L. I beg you will—don't let me prevent—I'll step into another room.

Mrs. B. Will you be so kind?—There are books in that room, if you will be so obliging as to amuse yourself there, I shall be glad to resume this conversation again.—He shan't stay long.

Mrs. L. I beg you will be in no hurry—I can wait with pleasure.

Mrs. B. This is a lover of mine; and a husband and a lover should be treated in the same manner;—perhaps it will divert you to hear how I manage him. I hear him on the stairs—so heaven's sake, make haste. Mignionet, show the way.

[Exeunt Mrs. Lovemore and Mignionet.]

Let me see how I look to receive him.

[Runs to her Glass.]

Enter LOVEMORE, with a Star and Riband, as Lord Etheridge.

[Looks in her Glass] Lord Etheridge! Walk in, my lord.

Love. *[Repeats]* A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Repairs her smiles——

Mrs. B. Repairs her smiles, my lord! I don't like your application of that phrase—Pray, my lord, are my

smiles out of repair, like an old house in the country that wants a tenant?

Love. Nay now, that's wresting the words from their visible intention.—You can't suppose I thought you want repair, whatever may be the case, ma'am, with regard to the want of a tenant?

Mrs. B. And so you think I really want a tenant? And perhaps you imagine too that I am going to put up a bill, [*Looks in her Glass*] to signify to all passers by that here is a mansion to let?—Well, I swear I don't think it would be a bad scheme.—I have a great mind to do so.

Love. And he who has the preference——

Mrs. B. Will be very happy—I know you mean so. But I'll let it to none but a single gentleman, that you may depend upon.

Love. What the devil does she mean by that! She has not got an inkling of the affair, I hope. [*Aside*] None else could presume, madam, to——

Mrs. B. And then it must be a lease for life—But nobody will be troubled with it—I shall never get it off my hands.—Do you think I shall, my lord?

Love. Why that question, madam? You know I am devoted to you, even if it were to be bought with life.

Mrs. B. Heav'ns! what a dying swain you are! And does your lordship really intend to be guilty of matrimony?—Lord, what a question have I asked?—Well, to be sure, I am a very madcap!—My lord, don't you think me a strange madcap?

Love. A wildness, like yours, that arises from vivacity and sentiment together, serves only to exalt your beauty, and give new poignancy to every charm.

Mrs. B. Well, upon my word, you have said it finely!—But you are in the right, my lord—I hate your pensive, melancholy beauty, that sits like a well-grown vegetable in a room for an hour together, till at last she is animated to the violent exertion of saying yes or no, and then enters into a matter of fact conversation.—“Have you heard the news? Miss Beverley is going to be married to captain Shoulderknot. My lord

Mortgage has had another tumble at Arthur's. Sir William Squanderstock has lost his election. They say short aprons are coming into fashion again."

Love. O Lord! a matter of fact conversation is insupportable.

Mrs. B. Pray, my lord, have you ever observed the manner of one lady's accosting another at Ranelagh?—She comes up to you with a demure look of insipid serenity—makes you a solemn salute—"Ma'am, I am overjoyed to meet you—you look charmingly.—But, dear ma'am, did you hear what happened to us all the other night?—We were going home from the opera, ma'am—you know my aunt Rolypoly—it was her coach—there was she and lady Betty Fidget—Your most obedient servant, ma'am—[*Courtesies to another, as it were going by*] Lady Betty, you know, is recovered—every body thought it over with her—but doctor Snakeroot was called in—no, not doctor Snakeroot, doctor Bolus it was—and so he altered the course of medicine—and so my lady Betty recovered:—Well, there was she and sir George Bragwell—a pretty man sir George—finest teeth in the world—Your ladyship's most obedient. We expected you last night, but you did not come—he, he!—And so there was he and the rest of us—and so, turning the corner of Bond-street, the villain of a coachman—How do you do, madam?—the villain of a coachman overturned us all;—my aunt Rolypoly was frightened out of her wits, and lady Betty has been nervish ever since:—Only think of that—such accidents in life.—Ma'am, your most obedient—I am proud to see you look so well."

Love. An exact description—the very thing—Ha, ha!

Mrs. B. And then, from this conversation, they all run to cards—"Quadrille has murdered wit."

Love. Ay, and beauty too; for upon these occasions, "the passions in the features are—" I have seen many a beautiful countenance change in a moment into absolute deformity; the little loves and graces, that before sparkled in the eye, bloom'd in the cheek, and smil'd

about the mouth, all fly off in an instant, and resign the features which they before adorn'd, to fear, to anger, to grief, and the whole train of fretful passions.

Mrs. B. Ay, and the rage we poor women are often betrayed into on these occasions——

Love. Very true, ma'am; and if by chance they do bridle and hold in a little, the struggle they undergo is the most ridiculous sight imaginable. I have seen an oath quivering upon the pale lip of a reigning toast for half an hour together, and then at last, when the whole room burst out into one loud, universal uproar—"My lord, you flung away the game"—"No, ma'am, it was you."—"Sir George, why did not you rough the diamond?"—"Captain Hazard, why did not you lead through the honour?"—"Ma'am, it was not the play."—"Pardon me, sir"—"But, ma'am"—"But, sir—I would not play with you for straws.—Don't you know what Hoyle says? If A and B are partners against C and D, and the game nine-all, A and B have won three tricks, and C and D four tricks, C leads his suit, D puts up the king, then returns the suit, A passes, C puts up the queen, B trumps the next:" and so A and B, and C and D, are banged about, and all is jargon, confusion, uproar, and wrangling, and nonsense, and noise. Ha, ha!

Mrs. B. Ha, ha! A fine picture of a rout;—but one must play sometimes—we must let our friends pick our pockets sometimes, or they'll drop our acquaintance.——Pray, my lord, do you never play?

Love. Play, ma'am!——I must lie to the end of the chapter—[*Aside*] Play! now and then, out of necessity;—otherwise I never touch a card.

Mrs. B. Oh! very true, you dedicate your time to the muses; a downright rhyming peer.—Do you know, my lord, that I am charmed with your song?

Love. Are you?

Mrs. B. I am indeed. I think you'd make a very tolerable Vauxhall poet.

Love. You flatter me, ma'am.

Mrs. B. Upon my word, you have drawn your pic-

ture so well in this little song, that one would imagine you had a wife at home to sit for it.

Love. Ma'am—[*Embarrassed*] the compliment—a—you are but laughing at me—I—I—I—Zounds! I am afraid she begins to suspect me—[*Aside*] A very scanty knowledge of the world will serve: and—and there is no need of one's own experience in these cases:—and when you, madam, are the original, it is no wonder that this copy—

Mrs. B. O lard, you are going to plague me again with your odious solicitations, but I won't hear them;—you must be gone.—If I should be weak enough to listen to you, what would become of sir Brilliant Fashion?

Love. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs. B. Yes, don't you know sir Brilliant Fashion?

Love. No, ma'am, I don't know the gentleman:—I beg pardon, if he is your acquaintance, but from what I have heard of him, I should not choose him to be among my intimates.

Re-enter MIGNIONET, in a violent Hurry.

Mig. O, undone! undone!

Mrs. B. What's the matter?

Mig. O lud! I am frightened out of my senses!—The poor lady!—Where's the hartshorn drops?—

Love. The lady! What lady?

Mig. Never stand asking what lady—she has fainted away, ma'am, all of a sudden.—Give me the drops. [Exit.]

Mrs. B. Let me run to her assistance.—Adieu, my lord—I shall be at home in the evening.—My lord, you'll excuse me; I expect you in the evening. [Exit.]

Love. I shall wait on you, ma'am. What a villain am I to carry on this scheme against so much beauty, innocence, and merit!—Ay, and to have the impudence to assume this badge of honour, to cover the most unwarrantable purposes!—But no reflection—have her I must, and that quickly too. If I don't prevail soon, I am undone—she'll find me out:—'egad, I'll be with her

betimes this evening, and press her with all the vehemence of love.—Women have their soft, unguarded moments, and who knows?—But to take the advantage of the openness and gaiety of her heart! And then, my friend sir Brilliant, will it be fair to supplant him?—Pr'ythee be quiet, my dear conscience; don't you be meddling; don't you interrupt a gentleman in his amusements. Don't you know, my good friend, that love has no respect of persons, knows no laws of friendship?—besides, 'tis all my wife's fault—why don't she strive to make home agreeable?

For foreign pleasures, foreign joy, I roam,

No thought of peace or happiness at home. [*Going. Sir Brilliant is heard singing within*] What the devil is madam Fortune at now?—Sir Brilliant, by all that's odious!—No place to conceal in!—No escape!—The door is lock'd!—Mignonet, Mignonet!—open the door!

Mig. [*Within*] You can't come in here, sir.

Love. This cursed star and this riband will ruin me.—Let me get off this confounded telltale evidence.

[*Takes off the Riband in a Hurry.*]

Enter SIR BRILLIANT FASHION.

Sir Bril. My dear madam, I most heartily rejoice—Ha!—Lovemore!

Love. Your slave, sir Brilliant, your slave—

[*Hiding the Star with his Hat.*]

Sir Bril. How is this?—I did not think you had been acquainted here!

Love. I came to look for you—I thought to have found you here;—and so I have scrap'd an acquaintance with the lady, and made it subservient to your purposes. I have been giving a great character of you.

Sir Bril. Well, but what's the matter?—What are you fumbling about? [*Pulls the Hat.*]

Love. 'Sdeath, have a care!—for heaven's sake—

[*Crams his Handkerchief there.*]

Sir Bril. What the devil ails you?

Love. Taken so unaccountably; my old complaint.

Sir Bril. What complaint?

Love. I must have a surgeon—occasioned by the stroke of a tennis-ball;—my lord Racket's unlucky left hand. Let me pass—there is something forming there—let me pass.—To be caught is the devil.—
[*Aside*] Don't name my name; you'll ruin all that I said for you, if you do. Sir Brilliant, your servant—There is certainly something forming. [Exit.

Sir Bril. Something forming there—I believe there is something forming here!—What can this mean?—I must have this explain'd.—Then Mrs. Lovemore's suspicions are right; I must come at the bottom of it.

Re-enter MRS. BELMOUR.

My dear Mrs. Belmour!—

Mrs. B. Heavens! What brings you here?

Sir Bril. I congratulate with myself upon the felicity of meeting you thus at home.

Mrs. B. Your visit is unseasonable—you must be gone.

Sir Bril. Madam, I have a thousand things—

Mrs. B. Well, well, another time.

Sir Bril. Of the tenderest import.

Mrs. B. I can't hear you now;—fly this moment!—I have a lady taken ill in the next room.

Sir Bril. Ay, and you have had a gentleman taken ill here too.

Mrs. B. Do you dispute my will and pleasure!—fly this instant. [*Turns him out*] So—I'll make sure of the door.

Re-enter MRS. LOVEMORE, leaning on MIGNIONET.

Mig. This way, madam; here's more air in this room.

Mrs. B. How do you find yourself, ma'am? Pray sit down. [*She sits.*

Mrs. L. My spirits are too weak to bear up any longer against such a scene of villany.

Mrs. B. Villany! What villany?

Mrs. L. Of the blackest die! I see, madam, you are acquainted with my husband.

Mrs. B. Acquainted with your husband!

Mrs. L. A moment's patience;—that gentleman that was here with you, is my husband! [Rises.

Mrs. B. Lord Etheridge your husband?

Mrs. L. Lord Etheridge, as he calls himself, and as you have been made to call him also, is no other than Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. B. And has he then been base enough to assume that title to ensnare me to my undoing?

Mrs. L. To see my husband carrying on this dark business—to see the man I have loved—the man I have esteem'd—the man I am afraid I must still love, though esteem him again I cannot, to be a witness to his complicated wickedness, it was too much for sensibility like mine—I felt the shock too severely, and sunk under it.

Mrs. B. I am ready to do the same myself now—I sink into the very ground with amazement. The first time I ever saw him, was at Mrs. Loveit's—she introduced him to me; the appointment was of her own making.

Mrs. L. You know her character, I suppose, madam?

Mrs. B. She's a woman of fashion, and sees a great deal of good company.

Mrs. L. Very capable of such an action for all that.

Mrs. B. Well, I could never have imagined that any woman would be so base as to pass such a cheat upon me.—Step this moment, and give orders never to let him within my doors again. [Exit Mignonet] I am much obliged to you, madam, for this visit;—to me it is highly fortunate, but I am sorry for your share in't, as the discovery brings you nothing but the conviction of your husband's baseness.

Mrs. L. I am determined to be no further uneasy about him; nor will I live a day longer under his roof.

Mrs. B. Hold! hold! make no violent resolutions.—You'll excuse me—I can't help feeling for you; and I think this incident may be still converted to your advantage.

Mrs. L. That can never be—I am lost beyond redemption.

Mrs. B. Don't decide that too rashly.—Besides, you have heard his sentiments.—Perhaps you are a little to blame yourself. We will talk this matter over coolly—Ma'am, you have saved me, and I must now discharge the obligation.—You shall stay and dine with me.

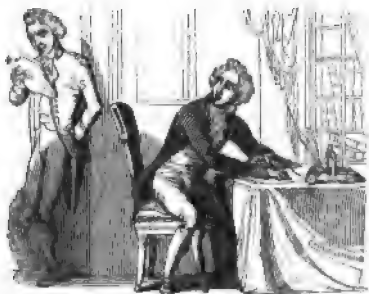
Mrs. L. I can't possibly do that—I won't give you so much trouble.

Mrs. B. It will be a pleasure, ma'am—you shall stay with me—I will not part with you; and I will lay such a plan as may ensure him yours for ever. Come, come, my dear madam, don't you still think he has some good qualities to apologize for his vices?

Mrs. L. I must own I still hope he has.

Mrs. B. Very well then, and he may still make atonement for all;—and let me tell you, that a man, who can make proper atonement for his faults, should not be entirely despised. Allons—Come, come, a man is worth thinking a little about, before one throws the hideous thing away for ever. [Exit.

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT'S House.

Enter LADY CONSTANT, with a Card, and FURNISH.

Lady C. Is the servant waiting?

Fur. He is, madam.

Lady C. Very well—I need not write—Give my humble service to Mrs. Lovemore, and I shall certainly wait on her.

Fur. I shall, madam.

[Going.]

Lady C. Has the servant carried back the things to sir Brilliant Fashion, as I ordered?

Fur. We expect him back every moment, madam.

Lady C. The insolence of that man, to think he can bribe me with his odious presents!—Very well, go and send my answer to Mrs. Lovemore.—*[Exit Furnish]* What can this mean? *[Reads]* *Begs the favour of her ladyship's company to cards this evening.*—Cards at Mrs. Lovemore's—there's something new in that—*Hopes her ladyship will not refuse, as it is a very particular affair requires Mrs. Lovemore's friends to be*

present.—There is some mystery in all this—What can it be?

Enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Here she is—Now let me see whether she will take any notice of the diamond buckles [*Aside*]—Your servant, madam.

Lady C. Your servant, sir.

Sir Bash. You seem out of humour, I think.

Lady C. And considering that you never give me cause, that's very strange, is it not?

Sir Bash. My lady Constant, if you did not give me cause—

Lady C. For heaven's sake, sir, let us have no more disagreeable altercation—I am tired of your violence of temper; your frequent starts of passion, and unaccountable fancies, which you too often mistake for realities.

Sir Bash. Fancies, madam! When do I take fancies for realities? Do I only fancy that you are eternally making exorbitant demands upon me for money, for the various articles of your expenses? And when you were for ever teasing me for diamonds, and I know not what, was that a fancy I had taken into my head without foundation?

Lady C. Pray, sir, let us not dispute—I promise you, never to trouble you on that head again.

Sir Bash. She has received them I see, and is obstinately resolved not to tell me. [*Aside*] Madam, I will not render myself ridiculous in the eyes of the world, for your whims.

Lady C. Nor will I, sir, be ridiculous any longer on account of your caprice. I have wrote to my solicitor to attend me here to-morrow morning with the articles of separation; and I presume, sir, that you can have no objection to their being carried into execution.—I have no time now to squander in frivolous debates, I must prepare to go out.—Your servant, sir. [*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. I must unburden myself at last! Must disclose the secrets of my heart—She has possessed my very soul;—is ever present to my imagination;—mingles

with all my thoughts;—inflames my tenderest passions, and raises such a conflict here—I cannot any longer keep this fire pent up—I'll throw myself open to her this very moment—Is any body in the way?

Enter SIDEBORD.

Where's your mistress?

Side. In her own room, sir.

Sir Bash. Draw that table over this way—A letter will do the business—It shall be so.—Reach me a chair.—You blockhead, why don't you reach a chair?

Side. There, your honour.

Sir Bash. Do you stay while I write a letter—You shall carry it for me. *[He sits down to write.]*

Side. Yes, sir—I hope he has got some intrigue upon his hands—A servant always thrives under a master that has his private amusements.—Love on, say I, if you are so given; it will all bring grist to my mill.

[Aside.]

Sir Bash. This will be a strange surprise upon my lady Constant—Soft, passionate, and tender, so far,—and yet it does not come up to what I feel. It is a hard thing, in excessive love like mine, to speak as delicately as we think, to the person that we adore.

[Aside. Writes on:]

Side. Let me see if there is any news in the paper of to-day. *[Takes a Newspaper out of his Pocket and reads]* What in the name of wonder is all this? O Lord! O Lord!—I can't help laughing—Ha, ha!—I never heard of the like before—Ha, ha!

Sir Bash. What does this rascal mean? *[Stares at him]* He does not suspect me, does he? *[Aside.]*

Side. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Bash. *[Stares still at him]* Perhaps he overheard my conversation with Mr. Lovemore—Harkye, sirrah! *[Rises]* if ever I find that you dare listen at any door in the house, I'll cut your ears off, I will.

Side. Sir!—

Sir Bash. Confess the truth;—have not you been listening, and overhearing my conversation?

Side. Who, I sir?—Not I, sir; as I hope to live, sir, I would not be guilty of such a thing, sir, for ever so much—I never did the like in my born days.

Sir Bash. What was you laughing at, rascal?

Side. An article, sir, I found in the newspaper; that's all, sir—I'll read it to you, sir—[*Reads*] We hear that a new comedy is now in rehearsal at one of the theatres, and will speedily be performed, entitled, *The Amorous Husband*; or, *the Man in Love with his own Wife*.

Sir Bash. Sir Brilliant told me truth, I see. [*Aside*]—Well, and what do you see to laugh at there, sir?

Side. Lord bless me, sir, I never heard of the like before,—I have served in a great many families, and I never heard of such a thing.

Sir Bash. Lookye there now!—[*Aside*] Sirrah! let me never hear that you have the trick of listening at any of my doors.

Side. No, sir—to be sure, sir—What has he got in his head? [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Wounds! I shall be laugh'd at by my own servants.—But no more scruples—pass that by; it shall all out—[*Sits down*] That fellow has so disconcerted me!—There, I have laid my whole heart open to her—I'll seal it directly. Here, take this, and bring me an answer—And, do you hear?—come hither—mind what I say; take care that nobody sees you.

Side. I warrant, sir. [*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. I feel as if a load was off my breast—and yet I fear—but I'm embark'd, and so I'll wait the event.

Re-enter SIDEBOARD.

Side. A word or two by way of direction, sir, would not be amiss.

Sir Bash. Blockhead!—Have not I directed it?

[*Takes it back.*]

Side. I could never have suspected him of having an intrigue. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. This rascal does not know the secret of

my heart, and he shall remain so—Lovemore shall open the affair to her—I am glad I have not trusted him—should I direct this, the fellow would find me out [*Aside*].—You may go about your business, Sideboard—I don't want you.

Side. Very well, sir—what's he at now?—If he does not let me manage his intrigues for him, I'll give him warning. [*Aside. Exit.*]

Sir Bash. Ay, Mr. Lovemore shall do it—the explanation will be more natural and easy from him. This scoundrel is coming again—no, it is not he.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Ha! Mr. Lovemore!—I am glad to see you!—Mr. Lovemore, you are heartily welcome!

Love. You see me here this second time to-day, sir Bashful, entirely on the score of friendship.

Sir Bash. I thank you, Mr. Lovemore; heartily thank you!

Love. I broke away from company on purpose to attend you—they would have had me stay the evening,—but I have more pleasure in serving my friends—Well, how does my lady?

Sir Bash. We don't hit at all, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. No?

Sir Bash. No, no—not at all—I think she has been rather worse since you spoke to her.

Love. A good symptom, that. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. She still talks of parting; and has even sent to her lawyer about it. Obstinate as a mule, Mr. Lovemore!—has had the diamond buckles, and sulky still—not one word about them.

Love. Time will bring things about—

Sir Bash. Po! there is not a moment to be lost. She is set upon it, Mr. Lovemore; and when she sets in she blows like a trade wind, all one way,—and so, to prevent extremities, I have e'en thought of explaining myself to her.

Love. What! acquaint her with your passion?

Sir Bash. Yes, and trust to her honour. I know I

could not do it myself in person—I should blush, and look silly, and falter—So I e'en set down to write her a letter—here it is, Mr. Lovemore, signed and sealed—but it is not directed—I got into a puzzle about that—for my servant, you know, would wonder at my writing a letter to her.

Love. So he would.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, he would have smok'd me,—but you are come most opportune—I'll tell you what, you shall direct it and send it to her—Nobody will be a jot the wiser.

Love. Well, I'll take it home with me, and send it to her to-morrow morning.

Sir Bash. No, no; now, directly now.

Love. I'll step to her then and speak for you—Why should you send a letter—If it does not take, she has you in her power—you can't go back—She'll have it under your hand.

Sir Bash. Why, that's true—that's true—And yet if I can obtain a letter from her, I shall have it under her hand. It must be so—If you go, she'll send a verbal answer by you, and then deny it afterwards.

Love. But I shall be a witness against her.

Sir Bash. That will never do—I shall this way draw her in to write a letter, and then I shall have her bound down.

Love. Better take a little time to consider of it.

Sir Bash. No, no, I can't defer it a moment; it burns like a fever here—I must have immediate relief; Mr. Lovemore, you must be my friend—Sit you down, and direct it for me—I'll step and send my servant to carry it for you—Sit down, sit down.

Re-enter SIDEBOARD.

Side. Sir Brilliant Fashion, sir, is below.

Sir Bash. Sir Brilliant Fashion!—Rascal! why did you say I was at home?

Side. I had no orders to the contrary, sir.

Love. 'Sdeath, he must not come up—Step to him, sir Bashful; amuse him, talk to him; tell him the

news, any thing, rather than let him come hither to interrupt us.

Sir Bash. No, no, he shan't come up.

Love. By no means; and be sure you don't let him know that I am here—The fellow follows me every where I go. *[Aside.*

Sir Bash. Never fear—He shan't come near you—and in the mean time, be sure you direct the letter.

Love. I will; but you lose time; away; be gone! *[Pushes him out]* A lucky accident this—I have gain'd time by it—what in the name of wonder has he wrote to her? I am defeated if this preposterous fellow brings things to an explanation—matters were in a fine train, and he himself levelling the road for me; and now, if this takes, I am blown up into the air at once: some unlucky planet rules to-day. First the widow Belmour—and now this will-o'-the-whisp—what can he have wrote to her? Friendship and wafer, by your leave—but will that be delicate? No—but 'twill be convenient. *[Opens it]* This letter shall never go—I'll write another myself—a lucky thought!—I absolve my stars—here is every thing ready—*[Sits down]* What shall I say? Any thing will do—*[Reads and writes]* Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that your charms have touched my heart?—um—loved you long; adored—um—um—flatter—um—um—um—happiest of mankind—um—um—um—sweetest revenge—um—um—husband—um—um—um—um—secret pleasure of rewarding the tenderness of your sincerest admirer,

LOVEMORE.

This will do—Let me seal it, and now direct it.

Re-enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Well, well, have you sent it?

Love. No.—Your servant has not been with me yet.

Sir Bash. Sideboard! why don't you wait on the gentleman as I order'd?—Sideboard—I have got rid of sir Brilliant.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, I would not let him come up for the world.

Re-enter SIDEBOARD.

Here, sirrah! Mr. Lovemore wants you.

Love. Master Sideboard, you must step to your lady with this letter.

Sir Bash. Charming! Charming! Ha, ha! [*Aside*] You must take it up to her directly.

Side. Take it up, sir? My lady's in the next room.

Sir Bash. Is she? then take it in there then to her—make haste—be gone! [*Erit Sideboard.*]

Love. No danger in this; she'll know her own interest, and have prudence to conceal every thing.

[*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. I hope this will succeed, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I hope it will.

Sir Bash. I shall for ever be oblig'd to you—and so will my lady too.

Love. I dare believe she won't prove ungrateful.

Sir Bash. Hush! hush!—I should like to see how she receives it—See, the door is conveniently open. [*Goes on tiptoe to the Door*] Yes, yes, I can see her—there she sits.

[*Peeps.*]

Love. Methinks I should like to observe her too.

Sir Bash. Hush—no noise.

[*Aside.*]

Love. Now, my dear boy, Cupid, incline her heart.

[*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. She has got it! She has got it!—I am frighted out of my wits!

Love. Hold your tongue—She opens it.—My dear Venus, now or never!

[*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. She colours.

Love. I like that rising blush—a tender token.

Sir Bash. She turns pale!

Love. The natural working of the passions.

Sir Bash. And now she reddens again—In disorder too—Death and fury, she tears the letter!—I'm undone!

[*Walks away from the Door.*]

Love. She has flung it from her with indignation—I'm undone too!

[*Aside.* *Goes from the Door.*]

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, you see what it's all come to!

Love. I am sorry to see it come to this indeed.

Sir Bash. Did you ever see such an insolent scorn?

Love. I never was so disappointed in all my life.

Sir Bash. An absurd, ungrateful woman!

Love. Ungrateful indeed!—To make such a return to so kind a letter.

Sir Bash. Yes, to so kind a letter.

Love. So full of the tenderest protestations.

Sir Bash. You say right—the tenderest protestations!

Love. So generous, so unreserved a declaration of love!

Sir Bash. Made with the greatest openness of heart—throwing one's self at her feet.

Love. Very true; throwing one's self at her very feet.

Sir Bash. And then to be spurned, kicked, and treated like a puppy!

Love. Ay, there it stings—to be treated like a puppy!

Sir Bash. I can't bear this!—My dear Mr. Lovemore, do you know in nature a thing so mortifying to the pride of man, as to be rejected and despised by a fine woman?

Love. Oh, 'tis the d——n'dest thing in the world—makes a man look so mean in his own eyes.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I'm heartily obliged to you for taking this affair so much to heart.

Love. I take it more to heart than you are aware of, I assure you.

Sir Bash. You are very kind indeed—This is enough to make one ashamed all the rest of one's life.

[Both speak these broken sentences in a kind of reverie.]

Enter SIR BRILLIANT FASHION.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, sir Bashful! I forgot to tell you the highest thing—Hey! what's the matter here?

Love. 'Sdeath! what brings him here again? [Aside.]

Sir Bril. You seem both out of humour.

Sir Bash. The blockheads of servants to let him in! [Aside.]

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, but this is very odd!—Perhaps Lovemore is borrowing money of you, sir Bashful, and you can't agree about the premium?

Sir Bash. Pressing business, sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Po! po!—he's a very honest fellow; let him have the money—By the way, Lovemore, I have a crow to pluck with you.

Love. Well, well, another time.—He haunts me up and down like my evil genius! [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Well, but you both look very grave upon it.—As you will;—you have not the same reason to be in harmony with yourselves as I have—Here, here!—I came back on purpose to tell you—[*Takes a shagreen Case out of his Pocket*] See here, my boys! See what a present has been made me!—A magnificent pair of diamond buckles, by Jupiter!

Love. How?

Sir Bash. A pair of diamond buckles!

Sir Bril. A pair of diamond buckles, sir:—How such a thing should be sent to me, I can't conceive—but so it is—The consequence of having some tolerable phrase, a person, and being attentive to the service of the ladies.

Sir Bash. And this was sent you as a present?

Sir Bril. Ay, as a present.—Do you envy me?

Sir Bash. I can't say but I do—My buckles, Mr. Lovemore, by all that's false in woman.

[*Aside to Lovemore.*

Love. Ay, he's the happy man, I see.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Both burning with envy, by Jupiter!

[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. But may not this be from some lady that imagines you sent them to her, and so she chooses to reject your present?

Sir Bril. No, no—no such thing!—Had I presented the buckles they would never have been returned.—Ladies don't reject presents, my dear sir Bashful, from the man that is agreeable in their eyes.

Sir Bash. So I believe—What a jade it is!

[*Aside.*

Love. She would not have torn a letter from him.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. No, no, had I sent them to a lady, take my word for it, they would have been very acceptable.

Sir Bash. So I suppose—I make no doubt but she'll give him my three hundred pounds too! [*Aside.*

Love. That he should be my rival, and overtop me thus!

[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. And pray now, sir Brilliant—I suppose you expect to have this lady?

Sir Bril. This is the forerunner of it, I think.—Ha, ha! sir Bashful!—Mr. Lovemore, this it is to be in luck!—Ha, ha, ha!

[*Laughs at both.*

Sir Bash. *Love.* Ha, ha!

[*Forcing a laugh.*

Sir Bash. Very well, my lady Constant!—very well, madam—very well!

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. I swear you both are strangely piqued at my success—Sir Bashful, observe how uneasy Lovemore looks.

Love. You wrong me, sir;—I—I—I—I am not uneasy.

Sir Bash. He's a true friend—He's uneasy on my account.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, but you are uneasy!—and, my dear sir Bashful, you repine at my success.

Sir Bash. Yes, sir, I do—I own it.

Sir Bril. Well, you're not disposed to be good company—I'll leave you.—Lovemore, where do you spend the evening?

Love. I can't say, sir;—I believe I shall stay here.

Sir Bril. Nay, nay, if you are so snappish—I am glad to hear that, I am engaged to his wife. [*Aside*] Is it not a rare present, sir Bashful? [*Pulling him by the Sleeve*] Thou dear pledge of love, let me lay thee close to my heart. [*Exit Sir Bril. looking at the Case.*

Sir Bash. What think ye now, Lovemore?

Love. All unaccountable to me, sir.

Sir Bash. Unaccountable!—'Tis too plain—my wife's a jade—

Love. I'm glad she has tore my letter, however.

Sir Bash. By all that's false, I'm gulled, cheated, imposed upon, deceived, and dubbed—Ay, here her ladyship comes—And now she shall hear her own. [*Aside.*]

Love. 'Sdeath! let me fly the approaching storm—
Sir Bashful, your humble servant, sir—I wish you a good night. [*Going.*]

Sir Bash. You must not go—you shan't leave me in this exigence—you shall be a witness of our separation.

Love. No, I can't bear the sight of her after what has pass'd—Good night—[*Sir Bashful holds him*]
D—nation! I must weather it! [*Aside.*]

Re-enter LADY CONSTANT.

Lady C. I am surprised, Mr. Lovemore, that you will offer to stay a moment longer in this house.

Love. How the devil shall I give a turn to this affair? [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore is my friend, madam; and I desire he'll stay here as long as he pleases, madam.

Love. All must come out. [*Aside.*]

Lady C. Your friend, sir Bashful!—And do you authorize him to make sport of me, sir?—I wonder, Mr. Lovemore, you would think of sending me such a letter!—Do you presume, sir, upon my having admitted a trifling act of civility from you?—Do you come disguised, sir, under a mask of friendship to undo me?

Love. Its a coming. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. A mask of friendship!—I know Mr. Lovemore too well, and I desired him to send that letter.

Love. Sir Bashful desired me, madam.

Sir Bash. I desired him, madam.

Love. He desired me, madam.

Lady C. What, to affront me, sir?

Sir Bash. There was not one word of truth in it.

Love. Not one word of truth, madam.

Sir Bash. It was all done to try you, madam; merely to know you a little or so.

Love. Merely to know you! pure innocent mirth.

Lady C. And am I to be treated thus, sir; to be ever tormented by you?—And could you, Mr. Lovemore, be so unmanly as to make yourself an accomplice in so mean an attempt to ensnare me?

Sir Bash. To ensnare me!—she calls it ensnaring—It is pretty plain from all that has pass'd between us that our tempers are not fit for one another; and I now tell you that I am ready to part as soon as you please. Nay I will part.

Lady C. That is the only thing we can agree in, sir.

Sir Bash. Had that letter come from another quarter, I know it would have been highly acceptable.

Lady C. I disdain the imputation!

Sir Bash. I will vent no more reproaches—This is the last of our conversing together—And take this with you, by the way, you are not to believe one word of that letter—And as to any passion, that any body declares for you, there was no such thing—was there, Lovemore?

[*Goes over to him.*]

Love. He states it all very right, madam.

Sir Bash. Let us laugh at her, Lovemore. Ha, ha, ha!

Love. Silly devil!—I can't help laughing at him.

[*Aside*] Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Bash. Ha, ha, ha!—all a bam, madam!—ha, ha! nothing else in the world!—all to make sport of you. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady C. I cannot bear this usage any longer—Two such brutes!—Is my chair ready there?—You may depend, sir, this is the last you will see of me in your house.

[*Exit Lady Constant.*]

Sir Bash. A bargain, madam, with all my heart!—Ha, ha! Lovemore, this was well managed.

Love. Charmingly managed, indeed!—I did not think you had so much spirit in you.

Sir Bash. I have found her out—I know her at last.—But, Mr. Lovemore, never own the letter; deny it to the last.

Love. You may depend upon me.

Sir Bash. I return you a thousand thanks.—A foolish woman, how she stands in her own light!

Love. Truly, I think she does.—*Sir Bashful*, I am mighty sorry I could not succeed better in this affair.

Sir Bash. And so am I.

Love. I have done my best, you see—and now I'll take my leave.

Sir Bash. Nay, stay a little longer.

Love. Had your lady proved tractable, I should not care how long I staid—but as things are situated, your humble servant, *sir Bashful*.—Well off this bout—well off!

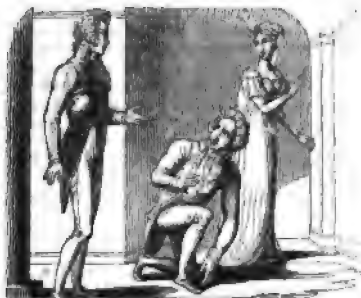
[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, your servant; a good night to you.—But harkye, Mr. Lovemore; if I can serve you with your lady—

Love. I thank you as much as if you did.

Sir Bash. Be sure you deny every thing.—Fare you well. [*Exit Love.*] He is a true friend indeed! I should have been undone but for him.—My lady Constant! My lady Constant!—Let me drive her from my thoughts.—Can I do it?—Rage, fury, love,—think no more of love—I never will own a tittle of that letter.—Odsso! yonder it lies in fragments upon the ground—I'll pick them up this moment—keep them safe in my own custody—And as to *sir Brilliant*, I shall know how to proceed with madam in regard to him—I'll watch them both—if I can but get ocular demonstration of her guilt—if I can but get the means in my power, to prove to the whole world that she is vile enough to cuckold me, I shall be happy. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. *An Apartment at Mr. LOVEMORE'S.*

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE, elegantly dressed, MUSLIN following her.

Mus. Why to be sure, ma'am, it is so for certain, and you are very much in the right of it.

Mrs. L. I fancy I am: I see the folly of my former conduct, and I am determined never to let my spirits sink into a melancholy state again.

Mus. Why, that's the very thing, ma'am; the very thing I have been always preaching up to you. Did not I always say, see company? Ma'am, take your share of pleasure, and never break your heart for any man. This is what I always said.

Mrs. L. It's very well, you need not say any more now.

Mus. I always said so. And what did the world say? Heavens bless her for a sweet woman! and a plague go with him for an inhuman, barbarous, bloody, murdering brute.

Mrs. L. No more of these liberties, I desire.

Mus. Nay, don't be angry: they did say so indeed. But, dear heart, how every body will be overjoyed when they find you have pluck'd up a little! As for me, it gives me new life, to have so much company in the house, and such a racketing at the door with coaches and chairs, enough to hurry a body out of one's wits. —Lard, this is another thing, and you look quite like another thing, ma'am, and that dress quite becomes you. —I suppose, ma'am, you will never wear your negligée again? It is not fit for you, indeed, ma'am. —It might pass very well with some folks, ma'am, but the like of you——

Mrs. L. Pr'ythee truce with your tongue, and see who is coming up stairs.

Enter MRS. BELMOUR.

Mrs. Belmour, I revive at the sight of you. Muslin, do you step down stairs and do as I have ordered you.

Mus. What the deuce can she be at now?

[Aside. Exit.

Mrs. B. You see I am punctual to my time.—Well, I admire your dress of all things. It's mighty pretty.

Mrs. L. I am glad you like it. But, under all this appearance of gaiety, I have at the bottom but an aching heart.

Mrs. B. Be ruled by me, have courage, courage, and I'll answer for the event. Why really now you look just as you should do.—Why should you neglect so fine a figure?

Mrs. L. You are so civil, Mrs. Belmour.

Mrs. B. And so true too—What was beautiful before is now heightened by the additional ornaments of dress; and if you will but animate and inspire the whole by those graces of the mind, which I am sure you possess, the impression cannot fail of being effectual upon all beholders, and even upon the depraved mind of Mr. Lovemore.—You have not seen him since, have you?

Mrs. L. No, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs. B. If he does but come home time enough, de-

pend upon it my plot will take. Well, and have you got together a good deal of company?

Mrs. L. Pretty well.

Mrs. B. That's right; show him that you will consult your own pleasure.—Is sir Brilliant of the party?

Mrs. L. Apropos, as soon as I came home I received a letter from him; he there urges his addresses with great warmth, begs to see me again, and has something particular to tell me—you shall see it.—O lud, I have not it about me!—I left it in my dressing-room I believe; you shall see it by-and-by: I took your advice, and sent him word he might come. That lure brought him hither immediately: he makes no doubt of his success with me.

Mrs. B. Well! two such friends as sir Brilliant and Mr. Lovemore, I believe, never existed!

Mrs. L. Their falsehood to each other is unparalleled. I left sir Brilliant at the whist table: as soon as the rubber is out, he'll certainly quit his company in pursuit of me. Apropos—my lady Constant is here.

Mrs. B. Is she?

Mrs. L. She is, and has been making the strangest discovery: Mr. Lovemore has had a design there too.

Mrs. B. Lud a mercy! what would have become of the poor man, if he had succeeded with us all.

Mrs. L. [*A rap at the Door*] As I live and breathe, I believe this is Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. B. If it is, every thing goes on swimmingly within.

Mrs. L. I hear his voice; it is he! How my heart beats!

Mrs. B. Courage, and the day's your own. Where must I run?

Mrs. L. In there, ma'am. Make haste; I hear his step on the stair-head.

Mrs. B. Success attend you. I am gone. [*Erit.*]

Mrs. L. I am frightened out of my senses. What the event may be I fear to think; but I must go through with it.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Mr. Lovemore, you are welcome home.

Love. Mrs. Lovemore, your servant.

[Without looking at her.]

Mrs. L. It is somewhat rare to see you at home so early.

Love. I said I would come home, did not I? I always like to be as good as my word.—What could she mean by this usage? to make an appointment, and break it thus abruptly!

[Aside.]

Mrs. L. He seems to muse upon it.

[Aside.]

Love. She does not mean to do so infamous a thing as to jilt me? [Aside] O Lord! I am wonderfully tired.

[Yawns, and sinks into an arm Chair.]

Mrs. L. You an't indisposed, I hope, my dear?

Love. No, my dear, I thank you, I am very well;—a little fatigued only, with jolting over the stones all the way from the city. I drank coffee with the old banker. I have been there ever since I saw you.—Confoundedly tired.—Where's William?

Mrs. L. Do you want any thing?

Love. Only my slippers. I am not in spirits, I think.

[Yawns.]

Mrs. L. You never are in spirits at home, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I beg your pardon: I never am any where more cheerful. [Stretches his Arms] I wish I may die if I an't very happy at home—very [Yawns] very happy!

Mrs. L. I can hear otherwise. I am informed that Mr. Lovemore is the inspirer of mirth and good humour wherever he goes.

Love. O! you overrate me; upon my soul you do.

Mrs. L. I can hear, sir, that no person's company is so acceptable to the ladies; that 'tis your wit that inspirits every thing; that you have your compliment for one, your smile for another, a whisper for a third, and so on, sir: you divide your favours, and are every where, but at home, all whim, vivacity, and spirit.

Love. No! no! [Laughs] how can you talk so? I swear I can't help laughing at the fancy. All whim, vivacity, and spirit! How can you banter so?—I divide my favours too!—O, heavens! I can't stand this railery: such a description of me!—I that am

rather saturnine, of a serious cast, and inclined to be pensive! I can't help laughing at the oddity of the conceit!—O Lord! O Lord! [Laughs.]

Mrs. L. Just as you please, sir. I see that I am ever to be treated with indifference.

[Walks across the Stage.]

Love. [Rises and walks the contrary Way] I can't put this widow Belmour out of my head. [Aside.]

Mrs. L. If I had done any thing to provoke this usage, this cold insolent contempt. [Walks.]

Love. I wish I had done with that business entirely; but my desires are kindled, and must be satisfied.

[Aside. They walk for some Time silently by each other.]

Mrs. L. What part of my conduct gives you offence, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. Still harping upon that ungrateful string?—but pr'ythee don't set me a laughing again.—Offence!—nothing gives me offence, child!—you know I am very fond—[Yawns and walks] I like you of all things, and think you a most admirable wife;—prudent, managing—careless of your own person, and very attentive to mine;—not much addicted to pleasure—grave, retired, and domestic; govern your house, pay the tradesmen's bills, [Yawns] scold the servants, and love your husband:—upon my soul, a very good wife!—as good a sort of a wife [Yawns] as a body might wish to have.—Where's William?—I must go to bed.

Mrs. L. To bed so early! Had not you better join the company?

Love. I shan't go out to-night.

Mrs. L. But I mean the company in the drawing-room.

Love. What company? [Stares at her.]

Mrs. L. That I invited to a rout.

Love. A rout in my house!—and you dressed out too!—What is all this?

Mrs. L. You have no objection, I hope?

Love. Objection!—No, I like company, you know, of all things; I'll go and join them: who are they all?

Mrs. L. You know them all; and there's your friend, sir Brilliant, there.

Love. Is he there? I'm glad of it. But pray now how comes this about?

Mrs. L. I intend to do it often.

Love. Do you?

Mrs. L. Ay, and not look tamely on, while you revel luxuriously in a course of pleasure. I shall pursue my own plan of diversion.

Love. Do so, do so, ma'am; the change in your temper will be very pleasing.

Mrs. L. I shall indeed, sir. I'm in earnest.

Love. By all means follow your own inclinations.

Mrs. L. And so I shall, sir, I assure you. [Sings.

Love. What the devil is the matter with her? And what in the name of wonder does all this mean?

Mrs. L. Mean, sir!—It means—it means—it means—it means—how can you ask me what it means?—Well, to be sure, the sobriety of that question!—Do you think a woman of spirit can have leisure to tell her meaning, when she is all air, alertness, pleasure, and enjoyment?

Love. She is mad!—Stark mad!

Mrs. L. You're mistaken, sir—not mad, but in spirits, that's all. No offence, I hope—Am I too flighty for you?—Perhaps I am: you are of a saturnine disposition, inclined to think a little or so. Well, don't let me interrupt you; don't let me be of any inconvenience. That would be the unpolitest thing; for a married couple to interfere and encroach on each other's pleasures! O hideous! it would be gothic to the last degree. Ha, ha, ha!

Love. [Forces a laugh] Ha, ha!—Ma'am, you—ha, ha! you are perfectly right.

Mrs. L. Nay, but I don't like that laugh now, I positively don't like it. Can't you laugh out as you were used to do? For my part, I'm determined to do nothing else all the rest of my life.

Love. This is the most astonishing thing! Ma'am, I don't rightly comprehend—

Mrs. L. Oh lud! oh lud!—with that important face! Well, but come now; what don't you comprehend?

Love. There is something in this treatment that I don't so well——

Mrs. L. Oh, are you there, sir? How quickly they, who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others, can feel for themselves, Mr. Lovemore!—But that's a grave reflection, and I hate reflection.

Love. What has she got into her head? This sudden change, Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you, is a little alarming, and——

Mrs. L. Nay, don't be frightened; there is no harm in innocent mirth, I hope? Never look so grave upon it. I assure you, sir, that though on your part you seem determined to offer constant indignities to your wife, and though the laws of retaliation would in some sort exculpate her, if, when provoked to the utmost, exasperated beyond all enduring, she should in her turn make him know what it is to receive an injury in the tenderest point——

Love. Madam!

[*Angrily.*

Mrs. L. Well, well, don't be frightened. I say I shan't retaliate: my own honour will secure you there, you may depend upon it.—You won't come and play a game at cards? Well, do as you like.—Well, you won't come? No, no, I see you won't—What say you to a bit of supper with us?—Nor that neither?—Follow your inclinations: it is not material where a body eats:—the company expects me—Your servant, Mr. Lovemore, yours, yours.

[*Exit, singing.*

Love. This is a frolic I never saw her in before!—Laugh all the rest of my life!—laws of retaliation!—an injury in the tenderest point!—the company expects me—Your servant, my dear!—yours, yours! [*Mimics her*] What the devil is all this? Some of her female friends have been tampering with her. Zounds, I must begin to look a little sharp after the lady. I'll go this moment into the card-room, and watch whom she whispers with, whom she ogles with, and every circumstance that can lead to——

[*Going.*

Re-enter MUSLIN, in a Hurry.

Mus. Madam, madam—here's your letter; I would not for all the world that my master—

Love. What, is she mad too? What's the matter, woman?

Mus. Nothing, sir—nothing: I wanted a word with my lady, that's all, sir.

Love. You would not for the world that your master—What was you going to say?—what paper's that?

Mus. Paper, sir!

Love. Paper, sir!—Let me see it.

Mus. Lord, sir! how can you ask a body for such a thing? It's a letter to me, sir, a letter from the country—a letter from my sister, sir. She bids me to buy her a shiver de fixe cap and a sixteenth in the lottery; and tells me of a number she dreamt of, that's all, sir: I'll put it up.

Love. Let me look at it.—Give it me this moment. [*Reads*] *To Mrs. Lovemore!—Sir Brilliant Fashion.* This is a letter from the country, is it?

Mus. That, sir—that is—no, sir—no;—that's not sister's letter.—If you will give me that back, sir, I'll show you the right one.

Love. Where did you get this?

Mus. Sir!

Love. Where did you get it?—Tell me truth—

Mus. Dear heart, you fright a body so—in the parlour, sir—I found it there.

Love. Very well!—leave the room.

Mus. The devil fetch it! I was never so out in my politics in all my days. [*Aside. Exit.*]

Love. A pretty epistle truly this seems to be—Let me read it. [*Reads.*]

Permit me, dear madam, to throw myself on my knees, for on my knees I must address you, and in that humble posture to implore your compassion—Compassion with a vengeance on him—Think you see me now, with tender, melting, supplicating eyes, languishing at your feet.—Very well, sir.—Can you find it in your heart to persist in cruelty?—Grant me but access to you

once more, and in addition to what I already said this morning I will urge such motives.—Urge motives, will ye?—as will suggest to you, that you should no longer hesitate in gratitude to reward him, who still on his knees here makes a vow to you of eternal constancy and love.

BRILLIANT FASHION.

So! so! so! your very humble servant, sir Brilliant Fashion!—This is your friendship for me, is it?—You are mighty kind, indeed, sir—but I thank you as much as if you had really done me the favour: and Mrs. Lovemore, I'm your humble servant too. She intends to laugh all the rest of her life! 'This letter will change her note. Yonder she comes along the gallery, and sir Brilliant in full chase of her. They come this way. Could I but detect them both now! I'll step aside; and who knows but the devil may tempt them to their undoing. At least I'll try. A polite husband I am: there's the coast clear for you, madam. [Exit.

Re-enter MRS. LOVEMORE, with SIR BRILLIANT FASHION.

Mrs. L. I tell you, sir Brilliant, your civility is odious, your compliments fulsome, and your solicitations impertinent, sir.—I must make use of harsh language, sir: you provoke it, and I can't refrain.

Sir Bril. Not retiring to solitude and discontent again, I hope, madam! Have a care, my dear Mrs. Lovemore, of a relapse.

Mrs. L. No danger of that, sir: don't be so solicitous about me. Why would you leave the company? Let me entreat you to return, sir.

Sir Bril. By heaven, there is more rapture in being one moment vis-a-vis with you than in the company of a whole drawing-room of beauties. Round you are melting pleasures, tender transports, youthful loves, and blooming graces, all unfelt, neglected, and despised by a tasteless, cold, languid, unimpassioned husband, while they might be all so much better employed to the purposes of ecstasy and bliss.

Mrs. L. I desire, sir Brilliant, you will desist from

this unequalled insolence. I am not to be treated in this manner;—and I assure you, sir, that were I not afraid of the ill consequences that might follow, I should not hesitate a moment to acquaint Mr. Lovemore with your whole behaviour.

Sir Bril. She won't tell her husband then!—A charming creature, and blessings on her for so convenient a hint! She yields, by all that's wicked; what shall I say to overwhelm her senses in a flood of nonsense? *[Aside.*

Go, my heart's envoys, tender sighs, make haste—

Still drink delicious poison from thy eye—

Raptures and paradise—

Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd.

[Forces her all this Time.

Re-enter LOVEMORE.

Love. Zoons! this is too much.

Sir Bril. *[Kneels down to buckle his Shoe]* This confounded buckle is always plaguing me. My dear boy, Lovemore! I rejoice to see thee.

[They stand looking at each other.

Love. And have you the confidence to look me in the face?

Sir Bril. I was telling your lady here of the most whimsical adventure—

Love. Don't add the meanness of falsehood to the black attempt of invading the happiness of your friend. I did imagine, sir, from the long intercourse that has subsisted between us, that you might have had delicacy enough, feeling enough, honour enough, sir, not to meditate an injury like this.

Sir Bril. Ay, 'tis all over, I am detected! *[Aside]* Mr. Lovemore, if begging your pardon for this rashness will any ways atone—

Love. No, sir, nothing can atone. The provocation you have given me—

Sir Bril. But, Mr. Lovemore—

Love. But, sir—

Sir Bril. I only beg—

Love. Pray, sir—Sir, I insist; I won't hear a word.

Sir Bril. I declare, upon my honour——

Love. Honour! for shame, sir Brilliant, don't mention the word.

Sir Bril. If begging pardon of that lady——

Love. That lady!—I desire you will never speak to that lady.

Sir Bril. Nay but pr'ythee, Lovemore——

Love. Po! po! don't tell me, sir——

[*Walks about in Anger.*]

Enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Did not I hear loud words among you? I certainly did. What are you quarrelling about?

Love. Read that, sir Bashful. [*Gives him Sir Brilliant's Letter*] Read that, and judge if I have not cause——

[*Sir Bashful reads to himself.*]

Sir Bril. Hear but what I have to say——

Love. No, sir, no; I have done with you for the present.—As for you, madam, I am satisfied with your conduct—I was indeed a little alarmed, but I have been a witness of your behaviour, and I am above harbouring low suspicions.

Sir Bash. Upon my word, Mr. Lovemore, this is carrying the jest too far.

Love. Sir!—It is the basest action a gentleman can be guilty of!

Sir Bash. Why, so I think.—Sir Brilliant, here, take this letter, and read it to him; his own letter to my wife.

[*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. Let me have it. [*Aside. Takes the Letter.*]

Sir Bash. 'Tis indeed, as you say, the worst thing a gentleman can be guilty of.

Love. 'Tis an unparalleled breach of friendship.

Sir Bril. Well, I can't see any thing unparalleled in it: I believe it will not be found to be without a precedent—as for example——

[*Reads.*]

To my lady CONSTANT——

Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that your charms have touched my heart?

Love. Zoons! my letter——

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. [*Reads*] I long have loved you, long adored.

Could I but flatter myself——

Sir Bash. The basest thing a man can be guilty of, Mr. Lovemore!

Love. All a forgery, sir: all a forgery.

[*Snatches the Letter.*

Sir Bash. That I deny; it is the very identical letter my lady threw away with such indignation.—My lady Constant, how have I wronged you!—That was the cause of your taking it so much to heart, Mr. Lovemore, was it?

Love. A mere contrivance to palliate his guilt. Po! po! I won't stay a moment longer among ye. I'll go into another room to avoid ye all. [*Opens the Door*] Hell and destruction!—what fiend is conjured up here? Zoons! let me make my escape out of the house.

[*Runs to the opposite Door.*

Mrs. L. I'll secure this door; you must not go, my dear.

Love. 'Sdeath, madam, let me pass!

Mrs. L. Nay, you shall stay: I want to introduce an acquaintance of mine to you.

Love. I desire, madam——

Re-enter MRS. BELMOUR.

Mrs. B. My lord, my lord Etheridge; I am heartily glad to see your lordship.

[*Takes hold of him.*

Mrs. L. Do, my dear, let me introduce this lady to you.

[*Turns him to her.*

Love. Here's the devil and all to do! [*Aside.*

Mrs. B. My lord, this is the most fortunate encounter——

Love. I wish I was fifty miles off.

[*Aside.*

Mrs. L. Mrs. Belmour, give me leave to introduce Mr. Lovemore to you.

[*Turns him to her.*

Mrs. B. No, my dear ma'am, let me introduce lord Etheridge to you. [*Pulls him*] My lord——

Sir Bril. In the name of wonder, what is all this?

Sir Bash. Wounds! is this another of his intrigues blown up?

Mrs. L. My dear ma'am, you are mistaken: this is my husband.

Mrs. B. Pardon me, ma'am, 'tis my lord Etheridge.

Mrs. L. My dear, how can you be so ill bred in your own house?—*Mrs. Belmour*—this is Mr. Lovemore.

Love. Are you going to toss me in a blanket, madam?—call up the rest of your people, if you are.

Mrs. B. Pshaw! what the deuce, your dress is altered! what's become of the star and riband? And so the gay, the florid, the magnifiquelord Etheridge dwindles down into plain Mr. Lovemore, the married man!—*Mr. Lovemore*, your most obedient, very humble servant, sir.

Love. I can't bear to feel myself in so ridiculous a situation. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. He has been passing himself for a lord, has he?

Mrs. B. I beg my compliments to your friend, Mrs. Loveit: I am much obliged to you both for your very honourable designs. [*Courtesies to him.*]

Love. I was never so ashamed in all my life! [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. So, so, so, all his pains were to hide the star from me.

Mrs. B. Mrs. Lovemore, I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the providence that directed you to pay me a visit, and I shall henceforth consider you as my deliverer.

Love. Zoons! It was she that fainted away in the closet, and be damn'd to her jealousy. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. [*Advances to Lovemore*] My lord, my lord, my lord Etheridge, as the man says in the play, "Your lordship's right welcome back to Denmark."

Love. Now he comes upon me.—O! I'm in a fine situation! [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. My lord, I hope that ugly pain in your lordship's side is abated.

Love. Absurd and ridiculous!

[*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. There is nothing forming there, I hope, my lord.

Love. D—nation! I can't bear all this—I won't stay to be teased by any of you—I'll go to the company in the card-room. [*Goes to the Door in the back Scene*]—Here is another fiend! I am beset with them.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

No way for an escape?—

[*Attempts both Stage-doors, and is prevented.*]

Lady C. I have lost every rubber I play'd for—quite broke; do, Mr. Lovemore, lend me another hundred.

Love. I would give a hundred you were all in Nova Scotia.

Lady C. Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you you are married to the falsest man; he has deceived me strangely.

Mrs. L. I begin to feel for him, and to pity his uneasiness.

[*Apart to Mrs. Belmour.*]

Mrs. B. Never talk of pity; let him be probed to the quick.

[*Apart.*]

Sir Bash. The case is pretty plain I think, now, sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Pretty plain, upon my soul! Ha, ha!

Love. I'll turn the tables upon sir Bashful for all this—[*Takes Sir Bashful's Letter out of his Pocket*]—Where is the mighty harm now in this letter?

Sir Bash. Where's the harm?—Ha, ha, ha!

Love. [*Reads*] *I cannot, my dearest life, any longer behold—*

Sir Bash. Shame and confusion! I am undone.

[*Aside.*]

Love. Hear this, sir Bashful—I cannot, my dearest life, any longer behold the manifold vexations, of which, through a false prejudice, I am myself the occasion.

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath! I'll hear no more of it.

[*Snatches at the Letter.*]

Love. No, sir; I resign it here, where it was directed.

Lady C. For heav'n's sake let us see—It is his hand, sure enough.

Love. Yes, madam, and those are his sentiments.

Sir Bash. I can't look any body in the face. [*Aside.*

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Bril. But, Lovemore, pray now don't you think it a base thing to invade the happiness of a friend?

Love. To cut the matter short with you, sir, we are both villains.

Sir Bril. Villains!

Love. Ay, both! we are pretty fellows indeed!

Mrs. B. I am glad to find you are awakened to a sense of your error.

Love. I am, madam, and am frank enough to own it. I am above attempting to disguise my feelings when I am conscious they are on the side of truth and honour. With sincere remorse I ask your pardon.—I should ask pardon of my lady Constant too, but the truth is, sir Bashful threw the whole affair in my way; and when a husband will be ashamed of loving a valuable woman, he must not be surprised if other people take her case into consideration, and love her for him.

Sir Bril. Why, faith, that does in some sort apologize for him.

Sir Bash. Sir Bashful! Sir Bashful! thou art ruined! [*Aside.*

Mrs. B. Well, sir, upon certain terms, I don't know but I may sign and seal your pardon.

Love. Terms!—what terms?

Mrs. B. That you make due expiation of your guilt to that lady. [*Points to Mrs. Lovemore.*

Love. That lady, ma'am!—That lady has no reason to complain.

Mrs. L. No reason to complain, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. No, madam, none; for whatever may have been my imprudences, they have had their source in your conduct.

Mrs. L. In my conduct, sir?

Love. In your conduct:—I here declare before this company, and I am above palliating the matter; I here declare, that no man in England could be better inclined

to domestic happiness, if you, madam, on your part, had been willing to make home agreeable.

Mrs. L. There, I confess, he touches me. [*Aside.*]

Love. You could take pains enough before marriage; you could put forth all your charms; practise all your arts; for ever changing; running an eternal round of variety, to win my affections: but when you had won them, you did not think them worth your keeping; never dressed, pensive, silent, melancholy; and the only entertainment in my house was the dear pleasure of a dull conjugal tete-a-tete; and all this insipidity, because you think the sole merit of a wife consists in her virtue: a fine way of amusing a husband, truly!

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, and so it is—— [*Laughing.*]

Mrs. L. Sir, I must own there is too much truth in what you say. This lady has opened my eyes, and convinced me there was a mistake in my former conduct.

Love. Come, come, you need say no more. I forgive you; I forgive.

Mrs. L. Forgive! I like that air of confidence, when you know, that on my side it is, at worst, an error in judgment; whereas, on yours——

Mrs. B. Po! po! never stand disputing: you know each other's faults and virtues: you have nothing to do but to mend the former, and enjoy the latter. There, there, kiss and be friends. There, Mrs. Lovemore, take your reclaimed libertine to your arms.

Love. 'Tis in your power, madam, to make a reclaimed libertine of me indeed.

Mrs. L. From this moment it shall be our mutual study to please each other.

Love. A match, with all my heart. I shall hereafter be ashamed only of my follies, but never shall be ashamed of owning that I sincerely love you.

Sir Bash. Shan't you be ashamed?

Love. Never, sir.

Sir Bash. And will you keep me in countenance?

Love. I will.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. I now forgive you all, from the bottom of my heart. My lady Constant, I own the letter, I own the sentiments of it; [*Embraces her*] and from this moment I take you to my heart.— Lovemore, zookers! you have made a man of me!

Sir Bril. And now, Mr. Lovemore, may I presume to hope for pardon at that lady's hands? [*Points to Mrs. L.*]

Love. My dear confederate in vice, your pardon is granted. Two sad dogs we have been. But come, give us your hand: we have used each other d—nably—for the future we will endeavour to make each other amends.

Sir Bril. And so we will.

Love. And now I heartily congratulate the whole company, that this business has had so happy a tendency to convince each of us of our folly.

Mrs. B. Pray, sir, don't draw me into a share of your folly.

Love. Come, come, my dear ma'am, you are not without your share of it. This will teach you, for the future, to be content with one lover at a time, without listening to a fellow you know nothing of, because he assumes a title, and reports well of himself.

Mrs. B. The reproof is just, I grant it.

Love. Come, let us join the company cheerfully, keep our own secrets, and not make ourselves the town talk.

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, let us keep the secret.

Love. What, returning to your fears again?

Sir Bash. I have done.

Love. Though faith if this business were known in the world, it might prove a very useful lesson: the men would see how their passions may carry them into the danger of wounding the bosom of a friend: the ladies would learn, that after the marriage rites, they should not suffer their powers of pleasing to languish away, but should still remember to sacrifice to the graces.

To win a man, when all your pains succeed,
The way to keep him is a task indeed. [*Exeunt.*]

SONG.

SUNG BY MRS. CIBBER.

Written at the revival of the Play, by Mr. Garrick

**YE fair married dames, who so often deplore,
That a lover once blest, is a lover no more,
Attend to my counsel, nor blush to be taught,
That prudence must cherish what beauty has caught.**

**The bloom of your cheek, and the glance of your eye.
Your roses and lilies may make the men sigh:
But roses and lilies, and sighs pass away,
And passion will die, as your beauties decay.**

**Use the man that you wed like your fav'rite guitar,
Though music in both, they are both apt to jar;
How tuneful and soft from a delicate touch,
Not handled too roughly, nor play'd on too much.**

**The sparrow and linnet will feed from your hand,
Grow tame by your kindness, and come at command :
Exert with your husband the same happy skill,
For hearts, like young birds, may be tam'd to your will.**

**Be gay and good-humour'd, complying and kind,
'Turn the chief of your care from your face to your mind ;
'Tis there that a wife may her conquests improve,
And Hymen shall rivet the fetters of love.**

THE
WAY OF THE WORLD.

A Comedy.

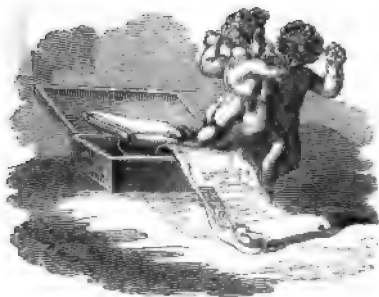
BY WILLIAM CONGREVE.

ACTUALLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.

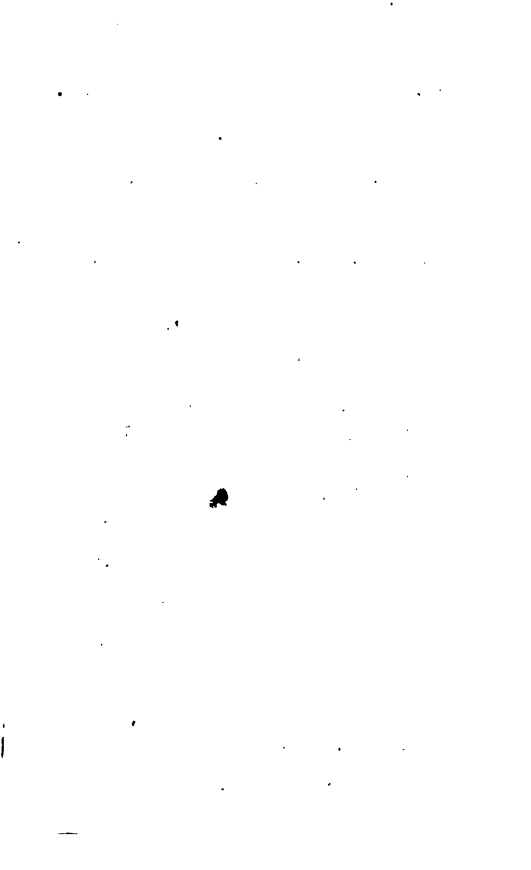


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1818.



THE WAY OF THE WORLD,

ORIGINALLY performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields, the year 1700, was the last, and probably, as critics say, the best of Congreve's Comedies: it has ever held a very high rank, and if it could be divested of its luxuriancies, which are unfortunately entwined with its very stamina, it would much oftener performed. This Comedy was at by any means at its outset so successful as it has been in later times.



PROLOGUE.

Of those few fools who with ill stars are curst,
Sure scribbling fools, call'd poets, fare the worst :
For they're a set of fools which *Fortune* makes,
And after she has made 'em fools, forsakes.
With *Nature's* caws 'tis quite a different case,
For *Fortune* favours all her idiot-race :
In her own nest the *cuckow-eggs* we find,
O'er which she broods to hatch the *changeling-kind*.
No portion for her own she has to spare,
So much she dotes on her adopted care.

Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
Suffer'd at first some trifling stakes to win :
But what unequal hazards do they run !
Each time they write, they venture all they've won : }
The squire that's butter'd still, is sure to be undone.
This author, heretofore, has found your favour ;
But pleads no merit from his past behaviour.
To build on that might prove a vain presumption,
Should grants, to poets made, admit resumption :
And in *Parnassus* he must lose his seat,
If that be found a forfeited estate.

He owns with toil he wrote the following scenes ;
But, if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains :
Damn him the more ; have no commiseration
For dulness on mature deliberation.

He swears he'll not resent one hiss'd-off scene,
Nor, like those peevish wits, his play maintain, }
Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.
Some plot we think he has, and some new thought :
Some humour too, no farce ; but that's a fault.
Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect ;
For so reform'd a town, who dares correct ?
To please, this time, has been his sole pretence,
He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.
Should he by chance a knave or fool expose,
That hurts none here, sure here are none of those.
In short, our play shall (with your leave to show it)
Give you one instance of a passive poet,
Who to your judgments yields all resignation,
'To save or damn, after your own discretion.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

*As originally acted at
Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1700. Covent Garden, 1754.*

Fainall	Mr. Betterton.	Mr. Farren.
✓ Mirabell	Mr. Verbruggen.	Mr. Wroughton.
Witwould	Mr. Bowen.	Mr. Lewis.
Petulant	Mr. Bowman.	Mr. Bonner.
Sir Witful Wit- would	} Mr. Underhill.	Mr. Wilson.
Waitwell		
	Mr. Bright.	Mr. Quin.
✓ Lady Wishfort	Mrs. Leigh.	Mrs. Pitt.
✓ Mrs. Millamant	Mrs. Bracegirdle.	Mrs. Abington.
Mrs. Marwood	Mrs. Barry.	Mrs. Bateman.
Mrs. Fainall	Mrs. Bowman.	Mrs. Inchiquin.
Foible	Mrs. Willis.	Mrs. Morton.
Mincing	Mrs. Prince.	Mrs. Pownall.

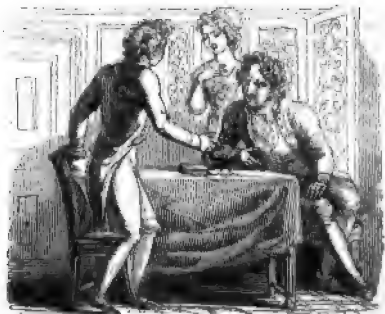
Footmen and Attendants.

SCENE—LONDON.

The Time equal to that of the Representation.

*Mrs. Fainall's mother
— Lady Wishfort & Mrs. Millamant
in her neck*

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *A Chocolate House.*

MIRABELL and FAINALL, rising from Cards; BETTY waiting.

Mir. **Y**OU are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall.

Fain. Have we done?

Mir. What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune, than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

Mir. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

Fain. Pr'ythee, why so reserved? Something has put you out of humour.

Mir. Not at all: I happen to be grave to-day; and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, Millamant and you quarrelled last night, after I left you: my fair cousin has some humours that would tempt the patience of a stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by?

Mir. Witwould and Petulant! and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or to sum up all in her own name, my old lady Wishfort came in.

Fain. O there it is then. She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason. What, then my wife was there?

Mir. Yes, and Mrs. Marwood, and three or four more, whom I never saw before. Seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whispered one another, then complained aloud of the vapours, and after fell into a profound silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mir. For which reason I resolved not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity, with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose, and with a constrained smile told her, I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome; she reddened, and I withdrew, without expecting her reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mir. She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such resignation.

Fain. What! though half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mir. I was then in such a humour, that I should have been better pleased if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal nights; they have 'em three times a week, and meet by turns, at one another's apartments; where they come together, like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murder'd reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and

it was once proposed that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved, that, to avoid scandal, there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwould and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mir. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind; and, full of the vigour of fifty-five, declares for a friend and ratafia; and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal your love to her niece, has provoked this separation: had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

Mir. I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the addresses of a young fellow. The devil's in't if an old woman is to be flatter'd farther. But for the discovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. What should provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made you advances which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mir. She was always civil to me, till of late; I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice; and think that she who does not refuse 'em every thing, can refuse 'em nothing.

Fain. You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and though you may have cruelty enough not to answer a lady's advances, you have too much generosity not to be tender of her honour. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected, and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

Mir. You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious

of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you, than is your wife.

Fain. Fie, fie, friend, if you grow censorious, I must leave you. I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mir. Who are they?

Fain. Petulant and Witwould. Bring me some chocolate. [Exit.]

Mir. Betty, what says your clock?

Betty. Turn'd of the last canonical hour, sir.

Mir. How pertinently the jade answers me! [Aside]
Ha! almost one o'clock! [Looking on his Watch] O, y'are come.

Enter Footman.

Well; is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

Foot. Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras, that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of dispatch, besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's place; and there they were rivetted in a trice.

Mir. So, so; you are sure they are married?

Foot. Incontestibly, sir: I am witness.

Mir. Have you the certificate?

Foot. Here it is, sir.

Mir. Has the tailor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

Foot. Yes, sir.

Mir. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, bid Waitwell shake his ears, and dame Partlet rustle up her feathers, and meet me at one o'clock by Rosamond's-pond, that I may see her before she returns to her lady; and as you tender your ears, be secret.

[Exit Footman.]

Enter FAINALL.

Fain. Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleased.

Mir. Ay; I have been engaged in a matter of some

sort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is not a cabal-night. I wonder, Fainall, that you, who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

Fain. Faith, I am not jealous. Besides, most who are engaged are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

Mir. I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal: for a woman who is not a fool, can have but one reason for associating with a man who is one.

Fain. Are you jealous as often as you see Witwoud entertained by Millamant?

Mir. Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

Fain. You do her wrong; for, to give her her due, she has wit.

Mir. She has beauty enough to make any man think so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Fain. For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mir. And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults; nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations, which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces; sifted her, and separated her failings; I studied 'em and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily: to which end I so used myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less disturbance; till in a few days it became habitual to me, to remember 'em without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own

frailties; and in all probability, in a little time longer. I shall like 'em as well.

Fain. Marry her, marry her; be half as well acquainted with her charms, as you are with her defects and my life on't you are your own man again.

Mir. Say you so?

Fain. I, I, I have experience: I have a wife, and a forth.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Is one squire Witwould here?

Betty. Yes; what's your business?

Mess. I have a letter for him, from his brother sir Wilful, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

Betty. He's in the next room, friend. That way.

[Exit Messenger]

Mir. What, is the chief of that noble family in town sir Wilful Witwould?

Fain. He is expected to-day. Do you know him?

Mir. I have seen him. He promises to be an extraordinary person. I think you have the honour to be related to him.

Fain. Yes; he is half-brother to this Witwould by a former wife, who was sister to my lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must be cousins too.

Mir. I would rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

Fain. He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

Mir. For travel! Why, the man that I mean is about forty.

Fain. No matter for that; 'tis for the honour of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

Mir. I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fain. By no means, 'tis better as 'tis; 'tis better

• e with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up with
 • g overstock'd.

Sir. Pray are the follies of this knight-errant, and
 e of the squire, his brother, any thing related?

Fain. Not at all; Witwould grows by the knight,
 a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your
 ath, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all
 p, and the other all core.

Mir. So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the
 er will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

Fain. Sir Willful is an odd mixture of bashfulness
 l obstinacy. But when he's drunk, he's as loving as
 a monster in the *Tempest*; and much after the same
 nner. To give t'other his due, he has something of
 od nature, and does not always want wit.

Mir. Not always; but as often as his memory fails
 n, and his common-place of comparisons. He is a
 ol with a good memory, and some few scraps of other
 ks wit. He is one whose conversation can never be
 proved, yet it is now and then to be endured. He has
 deed one good quality, he is not exceptions; for he
 passionately affects the reputation of understanding
 illery, that he will construe an affront into a jest;
 d call downright rudeness and ill language, satire
 d fire.

Fain. If you have a mind to finish his picture, you
 ve an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold
 e original.

Enter WITWOULD.

Wit. Afford me your compassion, my dears; pity
 o, Fainall; Mirabell, pity me.

Mir. I do, from my soul.

Fain. Why, what's the matter?

Wit. No letters for me, Betty?

Betty. Did not a messenger bring you one but now,
 r?

Wit. Ay, but no other?

Betty. No, sir.

Wit. That's hard, that's very hard! a messenger, a

mule, a beast of burden; he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another. And what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

Mir. A fool, and your brother, Witwould!

Wit. Ay, ay, my half-brother. My half-brother he is, no nearer upon honour.

Mir. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

Wit. Good, good, Mirabell *le drole!* Good, good; hang him, don't let's talk of him. Fainall, how does your lady? 'Gad, I say any thing in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage; I don't know what I say: but she's the best woman in the world.

Fain. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Wit. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall. Your judgment, Mirabell?

Mir. You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

Wit. Mirabell.

Mir. Ay.

Wit. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons.—'Gad, I have forgot what I was going to say to you.

Mir. I thank you heartily, heartily.

Wit. No, but, pr'ythee, excuse me—my memory is such a memory.

Mir. Have a care of such apologies, Witwould; for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the spleen or his memory.

Fain. What have you done with Petulant?

Wit. He's reckoning his money,—my money it was. I have had no luck to-day.

Fain. You may allow him to win of you at play; for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee.

Since you monopolize the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

Mir. I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwould.

Wit. Come, come, you are malicious now, and would spoil debates. Petulant's my friend, and a very pretty fellow, and a very honest fellow, and has a smattering of wit, and troth, a pretty deal of an odd sort of a wit: nay, I do him justice, I'm his friend, I won't wrong him. And if he had any judgment in the world, he could not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

Mir. You don't take your friend to be over-nicely loved.

Wit. No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own; no more breeding than a bum-fellow, that I grant you: 'tis pity; the fellow has fire and life.

Mir. What, courage?

Wit. Hum, faith; I don't know as to that; I can't say as to that. Yes, faith, in controversy, he'll conquer any body.

Mir. Though 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved.

Wit. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks; we have all our failings: you are too hard upon him, you are, faith. Let me excuse him: I can defend most of his faults, except one or two; one he says that's the truth on't; if he were my brother, I could not acquit him—that indeed I could wish were otherwise.

Mir. Ay, marry, what's that, Witwould?

Wit. O pardon me—expose the infirmities of my friend!—no, my dear, excuse me there.

Mir. What, I warrant he's insincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

Wit. No, no; what if he be? 'tis no matter for that, a wit will excuse that: a wit should no more be sincere than a woman constant; one argues a decay of purpose as 't'other of beauty.

Mir. May be you think him too positive?

Wit. No, no, his being positive is an incentive argument, and keeps up conversation.

Fain. Too illiterate?

Wit. That! that's his happiness, his want of it gives him the more opportunity to show his na parts.

Mir. He wants words?

Wit. Ay: but I like him for that now; for his of words gives me the pleasure very often to ex his meaning.

Fain. He's impudent?

Wit. No, that's not it.

Mir. Vain?

Wit. No.

Mir. What, he speaks unseasonable truths s times, because he has not wit enough to invent an sion?

Wit. Truth! ha, ha, ha! No, no; since you have it—I mean, he never speaks truth at all,—all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a wom quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

Enter Coachman.

Coach. Is master Petulant here, mistress?

Betty. Yes.

Coach. Three gentlewomen in a coach would with him.

Fain. O brave Petulant! three!

Betty. I'll tell him.

Coach. You must bring two dishes of chocolat a glass of cinnamon-water.

[Exeunt Coachman and ;

Wit. That should be for two fasting *bona roba*: a procuress troubled with wind. Now you may what the three are.

Mir. You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

Wit. Ay, ay, friendship without freedom is as love without enjoyment, or ~~one~~ without toa

but, to tell you a secret, these are trulls whom he allows coach-hire, and something more, by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

Mir. How!

Wit. You shall see he won't go to 'em, because there's no more company here to take notice of him.—Why, this is nothing to what he used to do: before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself.

Fain. Call for himself! what dost thou mean?

Wit. Mean, why he would slip you out of this chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him—as soon as your back was turned, whip he was gone;—then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and scarf, and a mask, slap into a hackney-coach, and drive bither to the door again in a trice; where he would send in for himself, that is, I mean, call for himself, wait for himself, nay, and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

Mir. I confess this is something extraordinary—I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a coming: O, I ask his pardon.

Enter PETULANT and BETTY.

Betty. Sir, the coach stays.

Pet. Well, well; I come;—'Sbud, a man had as good be a profess'd midwife, as a profess'd gallant, at this rate; to be knock'd up, and raised at all hours, and in all places. Dence on 'em, I won't come—D'ye hear, tell 'em I won't come—Let 'em snivel and cry their hearts out.

[Exit Betty.]

Fain. You are very cruel, Petulant.

Pet. All's one, let it pass—I have a humour to be cruel.

Mir. I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

Pet. Condition! condition's a dried fig, if I am not in humour—By this hand, if they were your—a—a—your what-d'ye-call-'ems themselves, they must wait or rub off, if I am not in the vein.

Mir. What-d'ye-call-'ems! what are they, I would?

Wit. Empresses, my dear—By your what-d'ye-'ems he means sultana queens.

Pet. Ay, Roxalanas.

Mir. Cry you mercy.

Fain. Witwould says they are—

Pet. What does he say th'are?

Wit. I? fine ladies, I say.

Pet. Pass on, Witwould—Harkee, by this light relations; two co-heiresses his consins, and an aunt, who loves intriguing better than a conventic

Wit. Ha, ha, ha! I had a mind to see how rogue would come off; ha, ha, ha! gad, I can't be with him, if he had said they were my mother an sisters.

Mir. No!

Wit. No; the rogue's wit and readiness of invention charm me, dear Petulant.

Enter BETTY.

Betty. They are gone, sir, in great anger.

Pet. Enough, let 'em trundle. Anger helps plexions, saves paint.

Fain. This continence is all dissembled; this order to have something to brag of the next time makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

Mir. Have you not left off your impudent professions there yet? I shall cut your throat, some time or other, Petulant, about that business.

Pet. Ay, ay, let that pass; there are other throats to be cut.

Mir. Meaning mine, sir?

Pet. Not I, I mean nobody, I know nothing there are uncles and nephews in the world, and may be rivals. What then? all's one for that.

Mir. Now, harkee, Petulant, come hither; or I shall call your interpreter.

Pet. Explain! I know nothing. Why you h

uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodged by my lady Wishfort's?

Mir. True.

Pet. Why, that's enough; you and he are not friends: and if he should marry and have a child, you may be disinherited, ha!

Mir. Where hast thou stumbled upon all this truth?

Pet. All's one for that; why then say I know something.

Mir. Come, thou art an honest fellow, Petulant, and shalt make love to my mistress, thou shalt, faith. What hast thou heard of my uncle?

Pet. I! nothing; I! If throats are to be cut, let swords clash; snug's the word, I shrug and am silent.

Mir. O raillery, raillery. Come, I know thou art in the women's secrets; what, you're a cabalist; I know you staid at Millamant's last night, after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle or me? tell me. If thou hadst but good nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwould, who is now thy competitor in fame, would show as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of orient; he would no more be seen by thee, than Mercury is by the sun. Come, I'm sure thou wo't tell me.

Pet. If I do, will you grant me common sense then, for the future?

Mir. Faith, I'll do what I can for thee, and I'll pray that it may be granted thee in the mean time.

Pet. Well, harkee!

[They talk apart.]

Fain. Petulant, and you both, will find Mirabell as warm a rival as a lover.

Wit. Pshaw, pshaw! that she laughs at Petulant is plain. And for my part, but that it is almost a fashion to admire her, I should, harkee—to tell you a secret, but let it go no farther—between friends, I shall never break my heart for her.

Fain. How!

Wit. She's handsome; but she's a sort of an uncertain woman.

Fain. I thought you had died for her.

Wit. Umph! no.

Fain. She has wit.

Wit. 'Tis what she will hardly allow any body else—now, I should hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her as he thinks.

Fain. Why do you think so?

Wit. We staid pretty late there last night, and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town, and is between him and the best part of his estate. Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my lady Wishfort has been told; and you know she hates Mirabell worse than a quaker hates a parrot, or than a fishmonger hates a hard frost. Whether this uncle has seen Mrs. Millamant or not, I cannot say; but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo; and if it should come to life, poor Mirabell would be in some sort unfortunately fobb'd, i'faith.

Fain. 'Tis impossible Millamant should hearken to it.

Wit. Faith, my dear, I can't tell; she's a woman, and a kind of a humourist.

Mir. And this is the sum of what you could collect last night?

Pet. The quintessence. May be Witwould knows more, he staid longer; besides, they never mind him; they say any thing before him.

Mir. I thought you had been the greatest favourite.

Pet. Ay, tête à tête; but not in public, because I make remarks.

Mir. You do?

Pet. Ay, ay; I'm malicious, man. Now he's soft, you know; they are not in awe of him: the fellow's well bred; he's what you call a——what-d'ye-call'em, a fine gentleman: but he's silly withal.

Mir. I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires. Fainall, are you for the Mall?

Fain. Ay, I'll take a turn before dinner.

Wit. Ay, we'll all walk in the park; the ladies talk of being there.

Mir. I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother, sir Wilfull's arrival.

Wit. No, no; he comes to his aunt's, my lady Wishfort: plague on him, I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the fool?

Pet. Beg him for his estate, that I may beg you afterwards; and so have but one trouble with you both.

Wit. O rare Petulant; thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us, and we'll be very severe.

Pet. Enough, I'm in a humour to be severe.

Mir. Are you? Pray then walk by yourselves. Let not us be accessary to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Pet. What, what? then let 'em either show their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else show their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

Mir. But hast not thou then sense enough to know that thou ought'st to be most ashamed thyself, when thou hast put another out of countenance?

Pet. Not I, by this hand; I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt or ill-breeding.

Mir. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill-manners, 'tis but fit
That impudence and malice pass for wit.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. *St. James's Park.*

Enter MRS. FAINALL and MRS. MARWOOD.

Mrs. F. Ay, ay, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either deating or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies are insupportable: and when they cease to love (we ought to think at least) they loathe: they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as from such, fly from us.

Mrs. Mar. True, 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life, that love should ever die before us; and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left than never to have been loved. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life because they once must leave us, is as preposterous, as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old. For my part, my

youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

Mrs. F. Then it seems you dissemble an aversion to mankind, only in compliance to my mother's humour.

Mrs. Mar. Certainly. To be free; I have no taste of those insipid dry discourses, with which our sex of force must entertain themselves apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to dote like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts, and every heart, or soon or late, receive and re-admit him as its lawful tyrant.

Mrs. F. Bless me, how have I been deceived? Why you're a professed libertine.

Mrs. Mar. You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere, acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

Mrs. F. Never.

Mrs. Mar. You hate mankind?

Mrs. F. Heartily, inveterately.

Mrs. Mar. Your husband?

Mrs. F. Most transcendently; ay, though I say it, meritoriously.

Mrs. Mar. Give me your hand upon it.

Mrs. F. There.

Mrs. Mar. I join with you; what I have said has been to try you.

Mrs. F. Is it possible? dost thou hate those vipers, men?

Mrs. Mar. I have done hating 'em, and am now come to despise 'em; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

Mrs. F. There spoke the spirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea.

Mrs. Mar. And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion farther.

Mrs. F. How?

Mrs. Mar. By marrying; if I could but find one that loved me very well, and would be thoroughly sen-

sible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the violence of undergoing the ceremony.

Mrs. F. You would not dishonour him.

Mrs. Mar. No: but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

Mrs. F. Why had you not as good do it?

Mrs. Mar. O if he should ever discover it, he would then know the worst, and be out of his pain; but I would have him ever to continue upon the rack of fear and jealousy.

Mrs. F. Ingenious mischief! would thou wert married to Mirabell!

Mrs. Mar. Would I were!

Mrs. F. You change colour.

Mrs. Mar. Because I hate him.

Mrs. F. So do I; but I can bear him named. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

Mrs. Mar. I never loved him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

Mrs. F. By the reason you give for your aversion, one would think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies must acquit him.

Mrs. Mar. O then it seems you are one of his favourable enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

Mrs. F. Do I? I think I am a little sick o'the sudden.

Mrs. Mar. What ails you;

Mrs. F. My husband. Don't you see him? He turn'd short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

Enter FAINALL and MIRABELL.

Mrs. Mar. Ha, ha, ha! he comes opportunely for you.

Mrs. F. For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fain. My dear.

Mrs. F. My soul.

Fain. You don't look well to day, child.

Mrs. F. D'ye think so?

Mir. He's the only man that does, madam.

Mrs. F. The only man that would tell me so, at least ; and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

Fain. O my dear, I am satisfied of your tenderness ; I know you cannot resent any thing from me ; especially what is an effect of my concern.

Mrs. F. Mr. Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation last night ; I could fain hear it out.

Mir. The persons concern'd in that affair, have yet a tolerable reputation. I am afraid Mr. Fainall will be censorious.

Mrs. F. He has a humour more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispense with the bearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another, by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr. Mirabell, and I dare promise you will oblige us both. [*Exeunt Mrs. Fainall and Mirabell.*]

Fain. Excellent creature ! well, sure, if I should live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

Mrs. Mar. Ay?

Fain. For having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it, of consequence, must put an end to all my hopes ; and what a wretch is he who must survive his hopes ! nothing remains, when that day comes, but to sit down and weep like Alexander, when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

Mrs. Mar. Will you not follow 'em?

Fain. No ! I think not.

Mrs. Mar. Pray let us ; I have a reason.

Fain. You are not jealous ?

Mrs. Mar. Of whom ?

Fain. Of Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you, that I am tender of your honour ?

Fain. You would intimate then, as if there were a particular understanding between my wife and him?

Mrs. Mar. I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought.

Fain. But he, I fear, is too insensible.

Mrs. Mar. It may be you are deceived.

Fain. It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

Mrs. Mar. What?

Fain. That I have been deceived, madam, and you are false.

Mrs. Mar. That I am false! What mean you?

Fain. To let you know, I see through all your little arts—Come, you both love him, and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another have made you clash till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession, reddening on your cheeks, and sparkling from your eyes.

Mrs. Mar. You do me wrong.

Fain. I do not. 'Twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him by my wife; that, by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures, and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that o'er the watchful lover slept?

Mrs. Mar. And wherewithal can you reproach me?

Fain. With infidelity, with loving another, with love of Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis false. I challenge you to show an instance that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him.

Fain. And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance! The injuries you have done him are a proof: your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? to deceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

Mrs. Mar. My obligations to my lady urged me: I

had profess'd a friendship to her; and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

Fain. What, was it conscience then? Profess'd a friendship! O the pious friendships of the female sex!

Mrs. Mar. More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us, or mutual faith to one another.

Fain. Ha, ha, ha! you are my wife's friend too.

Mrs. Mar. Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you upbraid me! Have I been false to her through strict fidelity to you, and sacrificed my friendship to keep my love inviolate? and have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit! To you it should be meritorious, that I have been vicious; and do you reflect that guilt upon me, which should lie buried in your bosom?

Fain. You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once could make of strictest ties, when set in competition with your love to me.

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis false, you urged it with deliberate malice; 'twas spoke in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

Fain. Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealousy: but you are stung to find you are discover'd.

Mrs. Mar. It shall be all discover'd. You too shall be discover'd; be sure you shall. I can but be exposed; if I do it myself, I shall prevent your baseness.

Fain. Why, what will you do?

Mrs. Mar. Disclose it to your wife; own what has past between us.

Fain. Frenzy!

Mrs. Mar. By all my wrongs I'll do't. I'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune: with both I trusted you, you bankrupt in honour, as indigent of wealth.

Fain. Your fame I have preserved. Your fortune

has been bestow'd as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures which we both have shared. Yet, had not you been false, I had ere this rapaid it. 'Tis true, had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have stolen their marriage, my lady had been incensed beyond all means of reconciliation: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune, which then would have descended to my wife. And wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you.

Mrs. Mar. Deceit and frivolous pretence.

Fain. Death, am I not married? what's pretence? Am I not imprison'd, fetter'd? have I not a wife? nay, a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to bustle through the ways of wedlock and this world. Will you be reconciled to truth and me?

Mrs. Mar. Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent. I hate you, and shall for ever.

Fain. For loving you?

Mrs. Mar. I loathe the name of love after such usage: and next to the guilt with which you would asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewell.

Fain. Nay, we must not part thus.

Mrs. Mar. Let me go.

Fain. Come, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Mar. I care not.—Let me go.—Break my hands, do—I'd leave 'em to get loose.

Fain. I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

Mrs. Mar. Well, I have deserved it all.

Fain. You know I love you.

Mrs. Mar. Poor dissembling! O that—Well, it is not yet—

Fain. What? what is it not? what is not yet? is it not yet too late?

Mrs. Mar. No, it is not yet too late, I have that comfort.

Fain. It is, to love another.

Mrs. Mar. But not to loathe, detest, abhor mankind, myself, and the whole treacherous world.

Fain. Nay, this is extravagance—Come, I ask your pardon—No tears—I was to blame—I could not love you and be easy in my doubts—Pray forbear—I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong; and any way, every way will make amends; I'll hate my wife yet more; damn her, I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere, any where, to another world. I'll marry thee—Be pacified—'Sdeath! they come, hide your face, your tears—You have a mask, wear it a moment. This way, this way, be persuaded. [Exeunt.

Enter MIRABELL and MRS. FAINALL. /

Mrs. F. They are here yet.

Mir. They are turning into the other walk.

Mrs. F. While I only hated my husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despised him, he's too offensive.

Mir. O you should hate with prudence.

Mrs. F. Yes, for I have loved with indiscretion.

Mir. You should have just so much disgust for your husband, as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

Mrs. F. You have been the cause that I have loved without bounds; and would you set limits to that aversion, of which you have been the occasion? Why did you make me marry this man?

Mir. Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? To save that idol reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence, of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and a designing lover; yet one whose wit and outward fair behaviour have gain'd a reputation with the town,

enough to make that woman stand excused, who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion. A worse had not answer'd to the purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

Mrs. F. I ought to stand in some degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

Mir. In justice to you, I have made you privy to my whole design, and put it in your power to ruin or advance my fortune.

Mrs. F. Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended uncle?

Mir. Waitwell, my servant.

Mrs. F. He is an humble servant to Foible, my mother's woman, and may win her to your interest.

Mir. Care is taken for that—she is won and worn this time. They were married this morning.

Mrs. F. Who?

Mir. Waitwell and Foible. I would not tempt a servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, should consent to marry my pretended uncle, he might like Mosca in the *Fu* stand upon terms; so I made him sure before-hand.

Mrs. F. So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will discover the imposture betimes; and release her, by producing a certificate of her gallant former marriage.

Mir. Yes, upon condition that she consent to a marriage with her niece, and surrender the moiety of her fortune in her possession.

Mrs. F. She talked last night of endeavouring a match between Millamant and your uncle.

Mir. That was by Foible's direction, and my instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

Mrs. F. Well, I have an opinion of your success for I believe my lady will do any thing to get an husband; and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to any thing to get rid of him.

Mr. Yes, I think the good lady would marry any
g that resembled a man, though 'twere no more
what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

Mrs. F. Female frailty! we must all come to it, if
live to be old, and feel the craving of a false appe-
when the true is decay'd.

Mr. An old woman's appetite is depraved like that
girl—'tis the green-sickness of a second childhood;
like the faint offer of a latter spring, serves but to
er in the fall, and withers in an affected bloom.

Mrs. F. Here's your mistress.

er *MRS. MILLAMANT, WITWOULD, and MINCING.*

Mr. Here she comes, i'faith, full sail, with her fan
ead and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for ten-
s—ha, no; I cry her mercy.

Mrs. F. I see but one poor empty souller; and he
's her woman after him.

Mr. You seem to be unattended, madam.—You
d to have the *beau-monde* throng after you, and a
k of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

Vit. Like moths about a candle—I had like to have
my comparison for want of breath.

Mrs. Mill. O I have denied myself airs to-day. I
e walk'd as fast through the crowd——

Vit. As a favourite just disgraced; and with as few
owers.

Mrs. Mill. Dear Mr. Witwould, truce with your
alitudes; for I am as sick of 'em——

Vit. As a physician of a good air—I cannot help it,
dam, though 'tis against myself.

Mrs. Mill. Yet again! Mincing, stand between me
l his wit.

Vit. Do, Mrs. Mincing, like a screen before a great
. I confess I do blaze to-day, I am too bright.

Mrs. F. But, dear Millamant, why were you so long?

Mrs. Mill. Long! lud! have I not made violent
te? I have ask'd every living thing I met for you; I
e inquired after you, as after a new fashion.

Wit. Madam, truce with your similitudes—no, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mir. By your leave, Witwould, that were like inquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

Wit. Hum, a hit, a hit, a palpable hit, I confess it.

Min. You were dress'd before I came abroad.

Mrs. Mill. Ay, that's true—O but then I had—
Mincing, what had I? why was I so long?

Min. O mem, your la'ship staid to peruse a packet of letters.

Mrs. Mill. O ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters—nobody knows how to write letters; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why—they serve one to pin up one's hair.

Wit. Is that the way? Pray, madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters? I find I must keep copies.

Mrs. Mill. Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwould. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think, I tried once, Mincing.

Min. O mem, I shall never forget it.

Mrs. Mill. Ay, poor Mincing tist and tist all the morning.

Min. Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow, mem, and all to no purpose. But when your la'ship pins it up with poetry, it sits so pleasant the next day as any thing, and is so pure and so crips.

Wit. Indeed, so crips?

Min. You're such a critic, Mr. Witwould.

Mrs. Mill. Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night? O ay, and went away—Now I think on't I'm angry—No, now I think on't I'm pleased—For I believe I gave you some pain.

Mir. Does that please you?

Mrs. Mill. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

Mir. You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

Mrs. Mill. O, I ask your pardon for that—One's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty one parts with one's power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mir. Ay, ay, suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover; and then how vain, how lost a thing you'll be! Nay, 'tis true: you are no longer handsome when you have lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant: for beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms—Your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet, after commendation, can be flatter'd by it, and discover beauties in it; for that reflects our praises, rather than your face.

Mrs. Mill. O the vanity of these men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift! Dear me, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then, if one pleases, one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty. Why you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

Mrs. Mill. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo: they can but reflect what we look and say; vain, empty things, if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mir. Yet, to those two vain empty things, you owe two of the greatest pleasures of your life.

Mrs. Mill. How so?

Mir. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised; and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Wit. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

Mrs. Mill. O fiction! Fainall, let us leave these men.

Mir. Draw off Witwould. [*Aside to Mrs. Fainall.*

Mrs. F. Immediately: I have a word or two for Mr. Witwould. [*Exeunt Mrs. Fainall and Witwould.*

Mir. I would beg a little private audience too—— You had the tyranny to deny me last night; though you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concern'd my love.

Mrs. Mill. You saw I was engaged.

Mir. Unkind. You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools; things who visit you from their excessive idleness; bestowing on your easiness that time, which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you, they are not capable; or if they were, it should be to you as a mortification; for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Mrs. Mill. I please myself——Besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

Mir. Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

Mrs. Mill. Yes, the vapours; fools are physic for it, next to *asa-fætida*.

Mir. You are not in a course of fools?

Mrs. Mill. Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom, you'll displease me. I think I must resolve, after all, not to have you——We shan't agree.

Mir. Not in our physic, it may be.

Mrs. Mill. And yet our distemper, in all likelihood, will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded, nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults——I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell——I'm resolved——I think——You may go——Ha, ha, ha! What would you give that you could help loving me?

Mir. I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.

Mrs. Mill. Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mir. I say that a man may as soon make a friend by

his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain-dealing and sincerity.

Mrs. Mill. Sententious Mirabell! Pry'thee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.

Mir. You are merry, madam; but I would persuade you for a moment to be serious.

Mrs. Mill. What, with that face? No, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a love-sick face. Ha, ha, ha! Well, I won't laugh, don't be peevish—Heigho! Now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me, woo me now—Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well: I see they are walking away.

Mir. Can you not find, in the variety of your disposition, one moment—

Mrs. Mill. To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to speed?—No.

Mir. But how you came to know it—

Mrs. Mill. Without the help of conjuration, you can't imagine; unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me.

[*Exeunt Millamant and Mincing.*]

Mir. I have something more—Gone—Think of you! to think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation; a very tranquillity of mind and mansion. A fellow that lives in a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man that is lodg'd in a woman. There is no point of the compass to which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turn'd; and by one as well as another; for motion, not method, is their occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play the fool by the force of instinct—O here comes my pair of turtles—What, billing so sweetly! is not Valentine's day over with you yet?

Enter WAITWELL and FOIBLE.

Sirrah, Waitwell, why sure you think you were married for your own recreation, and not for my convenience.

Wait. Your pardon, sir. With submission, we have indeed been billing; but still with an eye to business, sir. I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

Mir. Give you joy, Mrs. Foible.

Foi. O-las, sir, I'm so ashamed—I'm afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Wait. That she did indeed, sir.

Foi. I told my lady, as you instructed me, sir, that I had a prospect of seeing sir Rowland, your uncle; and that I would put her ladyship's picture in my pocket to show him; which I'll be sure to say has made him so enamour'd of her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship's feet, and worship the original.

Mir. Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

Wait. I think she has profited, sir, I think so.

Foi. You have seen madam Millamant, sir?

Mir. Yes.

Foi. I told her, sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

Mir. Your diligence will merit more—in the mean time——

[Gives Money.]

Foi. O, dear sir, your humble servant.

Wait. Spouse.

Mir. Stand off, sir, not a penny—Go on and prosper, Foible—The lease shall be made good, and the farm stock'd, if we succeed.

Foi. I don't question your generosity, sir: and you need not doubt of success. If you have no more commands, sir, I'll be gone; I'm sure my lady is at her

toilet, and can't dress till I come.—O dear, I'm sure that [*Looking out*] was Mrs. Marwood that went by in a mask; if she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your servant, sir. B'w'ye, Waitwell. [*Exit.*]

Wait. Sir Rowland, if you please. The jade's so pert upon her preferment, she forgets herself.

Mir. Come, sir, will you endeavour to forget yourself, and transform into sir Rowland?

Wait. Why, sir, it will be impossible I should remember myself. [*Exit Mirabell*] Married, knighted, and attended, all in one day! 'tis enough to make any man forget himself. The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance and familiarity with my former self; and fall from my transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, I shan't be quite the same Waitwell neither—for now I remember, I'm married, and can't be my own again.

Ay, there's my grief; that's the sad change of life;
To lose my title, and yet keep my wife. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *A Room in LADY WISHFORT's House.*

LADY WISHFORT at her Toilet, PEG waiting.

Lady W. Merciful, no news of Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam.

Lady W. I have no more patience——If I have not fretted myself till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me. Fetch me the red——the red, do you hear? An arrant ash-colour, as I'm a person. Look you how this wench stirs! why dost thou not fetch me a little red? didst thou not hear me, mopus?

Peg. The red ratafia, does your ladyship mean, or the cherry-brandy?

Lady W. Ratafia, fool! no, fool, not the ratafia, fool——Grant me patience! I mean the Spanish paper, idiot; complexion. Darling paint, paint, paint; dost thou understand that, changeling, dangling thy hands like bobbins before thee? why dost thou not stir, puppet? thou wooden thing upon wires.

Peg. Lord, madam, your ladyship is so impatient——

I cannot come at the paint, madam; Mrs. Foible has lock'd it up, and carried the key with her.

Lady W. Plague take you both—Fetch me the cherry-brandy then. [*Exit Peg*] I'm as pale and as faint, I look like Mrs. Quailsick, the curate's wife, that's always breeding—Wench, come, come, wench; what art thou doing, sipping? tasting? save thee, dost thou not know the bottle.

Enter PEG, with a Bottle and China Cup.

Peg. Madam, I was looking for a cup.

Lady W. A cup, save thee; and what a cup hast thou brought! dost thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? why didst thou not bring thy thimble? hast thou ne'er a brass thimble clinking in thy pocket with a bit of nutmeg? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill—So—again. See who that is. [*One knocks*] Set down the bottle first.—Here, here, under the table—What, wouldst thou go with the bottle in thy hand, like a tapster? [*Exit Peg*] As I'm a person, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road, before she came to me.

Enter PEG.

No Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam, Mrs. Marwood.

Lady W. O Marwood, let her come in. Come in, good Marwood.

Enter MRS. MARWOOD.

Mrs. Mar. I'm surprised to find your ladyship in dishabillé at this time of day.

Lady W. Foible's a lost thing; has been abroad since morning, and never heard of since.

Mrs. Mar. I saw her but now, as I came mask'd through the park, in conference with Mirabell.

Lady W. With Mirabell! you call my blood into my face, with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence. I sent her to negotiate an affair, in which, if I'm detected, I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm

ruin'd. Oh my dear friend, I'm a wretch of wretches if I'm detected.

Mrs. Mar. O madam, you cannot suspect Mrs. Foible's integrity.

Lady W. O, he carries poison in his tongue that would corrupt integrity itself. If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah! dear Marwood, what's integrity to an opportunity?—Hark! I hear her—Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom—You'll pardon me, dear friend, I can make bold with you—There are books over the chimney—Quarles and Pryn, and the Short View of the Stage, with Bunyan's works, to entertain you. [*Exit Mrs. Marwood*] Go, you thing, and send her in. [*Exit Peg.*]

Enter FOIBLE.

Lady W. O Foible, where hast thou been? what hast thou been doing?

Foi. Madam, I have seen the party.

Lady W. But what hast thou done?

Foi. Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promised. But a man so enamour'd—so transported! well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin—poor sir Rowland, I say.

Lady W. The miniature has been counted like—But hast thou not betray'd me, Foible? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell?—What hadst thou to do with him in the park? answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

Foi. So, mischief has been before-hand with me; what shall I say? [*Aside*] Alas, madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I'm sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst, I could have borne: but he had a fling at your ladyship too; and then I could not hold: but i'faith I gave him his own.

Lady W. Me! what did the filthy fellow say?

Foi. O madam; 'tis a shame to say what he said—

With his taunts and fleers, tossing up his nose. Humph, says he, what, you are hatching some plot, says he, you are so early abroad, or catering, says he, ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant—Half-pay is but thin subsistence, says he—Well, what pension does your lady propose? Let me see, says he, what, she must come down pretty deep now, she's superannuated, says he, and——

Lady W. Odds my life, I'll have him—I'll have him murder'd. I'll have him poison'd. Where does he eat? I'll marry a drawer, to have him poison'd in his wine.

Foi. Poison him! poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, madam, starve him; marry sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. O you would bless yourself, to hear what he said.

Lady W. A villain! superannuated!

Foi. Humph, says he, I hear you are laying designs against me too, says he, and Mrs. Millamant is to marry my uncle; he does not suspect a word of your ladyship; but, says he, I'll fit you for that; I warrant you, says he, I'll hamper you for that, says he, you and your old frippery too, says he, I'll handle you——

Lady W. Audacious villain! handle me! would he durst?—Frippery! old frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouth'd fellow? I'll be married to-morrow, I'll be contracted to-night.

Foi. The sooner the better, madam.

Lady W. Will sir Rowland be here, say'st thou?—when, Foible?

Foi. Incontinently, madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband after knighthood, with that impatience in which sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

Lady W. Frippery! superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery; and rags; a tatterdemallion—I hope to see him hung with tatters, like a Long-lane pent-house, or a gibbet thief. A slander-mouth'd railer: I warrant the spendthrift pro-

digal is in debt as much as the million lottery, or the whole court upon a birth-day. I'll spoil his credit with his tailor. Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall.

Foi. He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first; and angle into Blackfriars for brass farthings, with an old mitten.

Lady W. Ay, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features, to receive sir Rowland with any economy of face. The wretch has fretted me, that I am absolutely decay'd. Look, Foible.

Foi. Your ladyship has frown'd a little too rashly, indeed, madam. There are some cracks discernable in the white varnish.

Lady W. Let me see the glass—Cracks, say'st thou? why I am arrantly flay'd—I look like an old peel'd wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before sir Rowland comes; or I shall never keep up to my picture.

Foi. I warrant you, madam; a little art once made your picture like you; and now a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must sit for you, madam.

Lady W. But art thou sure sir Rowland will not fail to come? or will he not fail when he does come? will he be importunate, Foible, and push? for if he should not be importunate—I shall never break decorums—I shall die with confusion, if I am forced to advance—Oh no, I can never advance—I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope sir Rowland is better bred, than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy, neither.—I won't give him despair—But a little disdain is not amiss: a little scorn is alluring.

Foi. A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

Lady W. Yes, but tenderness becomes me best—You see that picture has a—sort of a—ha, Foible? a swimmingness in the eyes—Yes, I'll look so—My niece affects it; but she wants features. Is sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed—I'll dress above.

I'll receive sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? Don't answer me. I won't know; I'll be surprised; I'll be taken by surprise.

Foi. By storm, madam; sir Rowland's a brisk man.

Lady W. Is he? O then he'll importune, if he's a brisk man. I have a mortal terror at the apprehension. Let my things be removed, good Foible. [Exit.]

Enter MRS. FAINALL.

Mrs. F. O Foible, I have been in a fright, lest I should come too late. That devil, Marwood, saw you in the park with Mirabell, and I'm afraid will discover it to my lady.

Foi. Discover what, madam?

Mrs. F. Nay, nay, put not on that strange face. I am privy to the whole design, and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to personate Mirabell's uncle, and as such, winning my lady, to involve her in those difficulties from which Mirabell only must release her, by his making his conditions to have my cousin and her fortune left to her own disposal.

Foi. O dear madam, I beg your pardon. It was not my confidence in your ladyship that was deficient; but I thought the former good correspondence between your ladyship and Mr. Mirabell might have hinder'd his communicating this secret.

Mrs. F. Dear Foible, forget that.

Foi. O dear madam, Mr. Mirabell is such a sweet winning gentleman—But your ladyship is the pattern of generosity. Sweet lady, to be so good! Mr. Mirabell cannot choose but be grateful. I find your ladyship has his heart still. Now, madam, I can safely tell your ladyship our success. Mrs. Marwood had told my lady; but I warrant I managed myself. I turn'd it all for the better. I told my lady that Mr. Mirabell rail'd at her. I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my lady is so incensed, that she'll be contracted to sir Rowland to-night, she says.—I warrant I work'd

her up, that he may have her for asking for, as they say of a Welsh maidenhead.

Mrs. F. O rare Foible!

Foi. Madam, I beg your ladyship to acquaint Mr. Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him; besides, I believe madam Marwood watches me; she has a penchant; but I know Mr. Mirabell can't abide her. [*Calls*] John—remove my lady's toilet. Madam, your servant. My lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me, if I stay.

Mrs. F. I'll go with you up the back stairs, lest I should meet her. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter MRS. MARWOOD.

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, Mrs. Engine, is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this importance? Yes, I shall watch you. Why this wench is the *pass-partout*, a very master-key to every body's strong box. My friend Fainall, have you carried it so swimmingly? I thought there was something in it; but it seems 'tis over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of appetite then, but from a surfeit: else you could never be so cool to fall from a principal to be an assistant; to procure for him! a pattern of generosity, that I confess. Well, Mr. Fainall, you have met with your match. O man, man! Woman, woman! The devil's an ass: if I were a painter, I would draw him like an idiot, a driveller with a bib and bells. Man should have his head and horns, and woman the rest of him. Poor simple fiend! madam Marwood has a penchant, but he can't abide her. 'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair, without you could have kept his counsel closer. I shall not prove another pattern of generosity—he has not obliged me to that with those excesses of himself; and now I'll have none of him. Here comes the good lady, panting ripe; with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chemist upon the day of projection.

Enter LADY WISHFORT.

Lady W. O dear Marwood, what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness? But my dear friend is all goodness.

Mrs. Mar. No apologies, dear madam. I have been very well entertained.

Lady W. As I'm a person, I am in a very chaos to think I should so forget myself; but I have such an olio of affairs, really I know not what to do. [*Calls*] Foible!—I expect my nephew, sir Wilful, every moment too.—Why, Foible!—He means to travel for improvement.

Mrs. Mar. Methinks sir Wilful should rather think of marrying than travelling at his years. I hear he is turned of forty.

Lady W. O he's in less danger of being spoiled by his travels. I am against my nephew's marrying too young. It will be time enough when he comes back, and has acquired discretion to choose for himself.

Mrs. Mar. Methinks Mrs. Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards. 'Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

Lady W. I promise you I have thought on't; and, since 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will; I value your judgment extremely. On my word, I'll propose it.

Enter FOIBLE.

Come, come, Foible. I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner. I must make haste.

Foi. Mr. Witwould and Mr. Petulant are come to dine with your ladyship.

Lady W. O dear, I can't appear till I am dress'd. Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain 'em? I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me.

[*Exeunt Lady Wishfort and Foible.*]

Enter MRS. MILLAMANT and MINCING.

Mrs. Mill. Sure never any thing was so unbred as that odious man. Marwood, your servant.

Mrs. Mar. You have a colour: what's the matter?

Mrs. Mill. That horrid fellow, Petulant, has provoked me into a flame. I have broke my fan. Mincing, lend me yours. Is not all the powder out of my hair?

Mrs. Mar. No. What has he done?

Mrs. Mill. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talk'd—nay, he has said nothing neither; but he has contradicted every thing that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwould and he would have quarrell'd.

Min. I vow, mem, I thought once they would have fit.

Mrs. Mill. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing, I swear, that one has not the liberty of choosing one's acquaintance as one does one's clothes.

Mrs. Mar. If we had that liberty, we should be as weary of one set of acquaintance, though never so good, as we are of one suit, though never so fine. A fool and a doily stuff would now and then find days of grace, and be worn for variety.

Mrs. Mill. I could consent to wear 'em, if they would wear alike; but fools never wear out. They are such *drap-de-berry* things! without one could give 'em to one's chambermaid after a day or two.

Mrs. Mar. 'Twere better so indeed. Or what think you of the play-house? A fine gay glossy fool should be given there, like a new masking-habit after the masquerade is over, and we have done with the disguise. For a fool's visit is always a disguise; and never admitted by a woman of wit, but to blind her affair with a lover of sense. If you would but appear barefaced now, and own Mirabell, you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwould, as your hood and scarf. And indeed 'tis time, for the town has found it: the secret is grown too big for the pretence: 'tis like Mrs. Primly's great belly; she may lace it down before, but it burinishes on her hips. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it than my lady Strammel can her face, that goodly face, which, in defiance of her Rhenish-wine tea, will not be comprehended in a mask.

Mrs. Mill. I'll take my death, Marwood, you are

more censorious than a decay'd beauty, or a discarded toast. Mincing, tell the men they may come up. My aunt is not dressing here; their folly is less provoking than your malice. [*Exit Mincing*] The town has found it! what has it found? That Mirabell loves me is no more a secret, than it is a secret that you discover'd it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discovered it is a secret.

Mrs. Mar. You are nettled.

Mrs. Mill. You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

Mrs. Mill. Oh, silly! Ha, ha, ha! I could laugh immoderately. Poor Mirabell! His constancy to me has quite destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear I never enjoined it him, to be so coy: if I had the vanity to think he would obey me, I would command him to show more gallantry. 'Tis hardly well-bred to be so particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail, and so let him follow his own way. Ha, ha, ha! Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh, ha, ha, ha! though I grant you 'tis a little barbarous, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Mar. What pity 'tis, so much fine raillery, and deliver'd with so significant gesture, should be so unhappily directed to miscarry!

Mrs. Mill. Dear creature, I ask your pardon. I swear I did not mind you.

Mrs. Mar. Mr. Mirabell and you both may think a thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you—

Mrs. Mill. O dear, what? for 'tis the same thing, if I hear it. Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Mar. That I detest him, hate him, madam.

Mrs. Mill. O madam! why, so do I. And yet the creature loves me; ha, ha, ha! How can one forbear laughing to think of it?—I am a Sybil if I am not amazed to think what he can see in me. I'll take my death, I think you are handsomer, and within a year or two as young. If you could but stay for me, I should

overtake you. But that cannot be. Well, that thought makes me melancholic. Now I'll be sad.

Mrs. Mar. Your merry note may be changed sooner than you think.

Mrs. Mill. D'ye say so? Then I'm resolved I'll have a song to keep up my spirits.

Enter MINCING.

Min. The gentlemen stay but to comb, madam; and will wait on you.

Enter PETULANT and WITWOULD.

Mrs. Mill. Is your animosity composed, gentlemen?

Wit. Raillery, raillery, madam; we have no animosity; we hit off a little wit now and then, but no animosity. The falling-out of wits, is like the falling-out of lovers. We agree in the main, like treble and bass. Ha, Petulant!

Pet. Ay, in the main. But when I have a humour to contradict—

Wit. Ay, when he has a humour to contradict, then I contradict too. What, I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battledores; for contradictions beget one another like Jews.

Pet. If he says black's black—If I have a humour to say 'tis blue—Let that pass; all's one for that. If I have a humour to prove it, it must be granted.

Wit. Not positively must—But it may—it may.

Pet. Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

Wit. Ay, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may. That's a logical distinction now, madam.

Mrs. Mar. I perceive your debates are of importance, and very learnedly handled.

Pet. Importance is one thing, and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert.

Wit. Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

Pet. No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

Mrs. Mar. That's a sign indeed 'tis no enemy to you.

Pet. No, no, 'tis no enemy to any body, but them that have it.

Mrs. Mill. Well, an illiterate man's my aversion. I wonder at the impudence of an illiterate man, to offer to make love.

Wit. That I confess I wonder at too.

Mrs. Mill. Ah! to marry an ignorant! that can hardly read or write.

Pet. Why should a man be any further from being married though he can't read, than he is from being hang'd. The ordinary's paid for setting the psalm, and the parish priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow, in both cases, a man may do it without book; so all's one for that.

Mrs. Mill. D'ye hear the creature? Lord, here's company, I'll be gone.

[Exeunt Mrs. Millamant and Mincing.]

Enter SIR WILFUL WITWOULD in a Riding-dress, and Footman.

Wit. In the name of Bartholomew and his fair, what have we here?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Wit. Not I. Yes, I think it is he. I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the Revolution.

Foot. Sir, my lady's dressing. Here's company; if you please to walk in, in the mean time.

Sir W. Dressing! What, 'tis but morning here I warrant with you in London; we should count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropshire. Why then belike my aunt han't dined yet. Ha, friend?

Foot. Your aunt, sir?

Sir W. My aunt, sir? yes, my aunt, sir, and your lady, sir; your lady is my aunt, sir. Why, what, dost thou not know me, friend? Why then send somebody hither that does. How long hast thou lived with thy lady, fellow, ha?

Foot. A week, sir; longer than any in the house, except my lady's woman.

Sir W. Why then belike thou dost not know thy lady, if thou seest her; ha, friend!

Foot. Why truly, sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she is dress'd. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time.

Sir W. Well, pr'ythee, try what thou can'st do; if thou canst not guess, inquire her out; dost hear, fellow? and tell her, her nephew, sir Wilful Witwould, is in the house.

Foot. I shall, sir.

Sir W. Hold ye, hear me, friend; a word with you in your ear: pr'ythee, who are these gallants?

Foot. Really, sir, I can't tell; here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all. [Exit.

Sir W. Oons, this fellow knows less than a starling; I don't think a'knows his own name.

Mrs. Mar. Mr. Witwould, your brother is not behind-hand in forgetfulness. I fancy he has forgot you too.

Wit. I hope so. The deuce take him that remembers first, I say.

Sir W. Save you, gentlemen and lady.

Mrs. Mar. For shame, Mr. Witwould; why won't you speak to him? And you, sir.

Wit. Petulant, speak.

Pet. It seems as if you had come a journey, sir; hem, hem. [Surveying him round.

Sir W. Very likely, sir, that it may seem so.

Pet. No offence, I hope, sir.

Sir W. May be not, sir; thereafter, as 'tis meant, sir.

Wit. Smoke the boots, the boots; Petulant, the boots. Ha, ha, ha!

Pet. Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

Sir W. Why, 'tis like you may, sir: if you are not satisfied with the information of my boots, sir, if you will step to the stable, you may inquire further of my horse, sir.

Pet. Your horse, sir! your horse is an ass, sir!

Sir W. Do you speak by way of offence, sir?

Mrs. Mar. The gentleman's merry, that's all, sir—'Slife, we shall have a quarrel betwixt an horse and ass, before they find one another out.—You must not take any thing amiss from your friends, sir. You are among your friends, here, though it may be you don't know it. If I am not mistaken, you are sir Wilful Witwould.

Sir W. Right, lady; I am sir Wilful Witwould, so I write myself; no offence to any body, I hope; and nephew to the lady Wishfort of this mansion.

Mrs. Mar. Don't you know this gentleman, sir?

Sir W. Hum! What, sure 'tis not—yea, by'r lady but 'tis.—'Sheart, I know not whether 'tis or no.—Yea but 'tis, by the wrekin. Brother Anthony! what, Tony, i'faith! what, dost thou not know me? By'r lady, nor I thee, thou art so belaced, and so beperiwigg'd. 'Sheart why dost not speak? art thou o'erjoyed?

Wit. Odso, brother, is it you? your servant, brother.

Sir W. Your servant! why yours, sir.

Wit. No offence, I hope, brother.

Sir W. 'Sheart, sir, but there is, and much offence. A plague! is this your inns-o'court breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

Wit. Why, brother Wilful of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town. 'Tis not the fashion here; 'tis not indeed, dear brother.

Sir W. The fashion's a fool; and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this; by'r lady, I conjectured you were a fop, since you began to change the style of your letters, and write in a scrap of paper, gilt round the edges, no bigger than a subpoena. I might expect this when you left off honoured brother; and hoping you are in good health, and so forth—To begin with a *Rat me, knight, I'm so sick of a last night's debauch*—Ods heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a wench and a bottle, and so conclude. You could write news before you

were out of your time, when you lived with honest Pimplenose, the attorney of Furnival's Inn, you could entreat to be remembered then to your friends round the Wrekin.

Pet. 'Slife, Witwould, were you ever an attorney's clerk, of the family of the Furnivals? Ha, ha, ha!

Wit. Ay, ay, but that was but for awhile. Not long, not long; pshaw, I was not in my own power then. An orphan, and this fellow was my guardian; ay, ay, I was glad to consent to that, man, to come to London. He had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound 'prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

Sir W. 'Sheart, and better than be bound to a maker of fops; where, I suppose, you have served your time; and now you may set up for yourself.

Mrs. Mar. You intend to travel, sir, as I'm informed.

Sir W. Belike I may, madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

Pet. And the wind serve.

Sir W. Serve or not serve, I shan't ask licence of you, sir; nor the weather-cook your companion. I direct my discourse to the lady, sir. 'Tis like my aunt may have told you, madam; yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts.

Mrs. Mar. I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

Sir W. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution, because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand shill I, shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't: but I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your lingo first, before I cross the seas. I'd gladly have a spice of your French, as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

Mrs. Mar. Here's an academy in town for that, and dancing, and curious accomplishments, calculated purely for the use of grown gentlemen.

Sir W. Is there? 'tis like there may.

Mrs. Mar. No doubt you will return very much improved.

Wit. Yes, refined like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing.

Enter LADY WISHFORT and FAINALL.

Lady W. Nephew, you are welcome.

Sir W. Aunt, your servant.

Fain. Sir Wilful, your most faithful servant.

Sir W. Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

Lady W. Cousin Witwould, your servant; Mr. Petulant, your servant. Nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink any thing after your journey, nephew, before you eat? dinner's almost ready.

Sir W. I'm very well, I thank you, aunt; however, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart, I was afraid you would have been in the fashion too, and have remembered to have forgot your relations. Here's your cousin Tony; belike I mayn't call him brother, for fear of offence.

Lady W. O, he's a railer, nephew; my cousin's a wit: and your great wits always rally their best friends to choose. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better.

[Fainall and Mrs. Marwood talk apart.]

Sir W. Why then let him hold his tongue in the mean time, and rail when that day comes.

Enter MINCING.

Min. Mem, I am come to acquaint your la'ship that dinner is impatient.

Sir W. Impatient? why then belike it won't stay till I pull off my boots. Sweetheart, can you help me to a pair of slippers? My man's with his horses I warrant.

Lady W. Fie, fie, nephew, you would not pull off your boots here; go down into the hall; dinner shall stay for you. *[Exeunt Mincing and Sir Wilfull]* My nephew's a little unbred, you'll pardon him, madam. Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?

Mrs. Mar. I'll follow you, madam, before sir Wilful is ready.

[Exeunt Lady Wishful, Petulant and Witwoud.]

Fain. Why then Foible's a procuress; an errant, rank, match-making procuress. And I it seems am a husband, a rank husband; and my wife a very errant, rank wife, all in the way of the world. 'Sdeath! to be out-witted, out-jilted, out-matrimony'd—and be out-stripp'd by my wife; 'tis scurvy wedlock.

Mrs. Mar. Then shake it off: you have often wish'd for an opportunity to part; and now you have it. But first prevent their plot—the half of Millamant's fortune is too considerable to be parted with, to a foe, to Mirabell.

Fain. Ay, that had been mine, had you not made that fond discovery; that had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added lustre to my dishonour by that increase of fortune. I could have worn 'em tipt with gold, though my forehead had been furnish'd like a deputy-lieutenant's hall.

Mrs. Mar. They may prove a cap of maintenance to you still, if you can away with your wife. And she's no worse than when you had her—I dare swear she had given up her game before she was married.

Fain. Hum! that may be.

Mrs. Mar. You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected, why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

Fain. The means, the means.

Mrs. Mar. Discover to my lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her. My lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it, just upon the discovery of this imposture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds, and sacrifice niece and fortune, and all, at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she should flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fain. This has an appearance.

Mrs. Mar. I'm sorry I hinted to my lady to endeavour a match between Millamant and sir Wilful; that may be an obstacle.

Fain. O, for that matter leave me to manage him; I'll disable him for that; he will drink like a Dane: after dinner, I'll set his hand in.

Mrs. Mar. Well, how do you stand affected towards your lady?

Fain. Why, faith, I'm thinking of it. Let me see—I am married already; so that's over—my wife has play'd the jade with me—well, that's over too—I never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been over too by this time—jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of jealousy. Weary of her, I am and shall be—no, there's no end of that; no, no, that were too much to hope. Thus far concerning my repose. Now for my reputation—as to my own, I married not for it; so that's out of the question. And as to my part in my wife's—why she had parted with hers before; so bringing none to me, she can take none from me: 'tis against all rule of play, that I should lose to one, who has not wherewithal to stake.

Mrs. Mar. Besides you forget, marriage is honourable.

Fain. Hum! faith, and that's well thought on. Marriage is honourable, as you say; and if so, wherefore should cuckoldom be a discredit, being derived from so honourable a root?

Mrs. Mar. Nay, I know not; if the root be honourable, why not the branches?

Fain. So, so, why this point's clear—well, how do we proceed?

Mrs. Mar. I will contrive a letter which shall be deliver'd to my lady at the time when that rascal who is to act sir Rowland is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand—for the less I appear to know of the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I would not have Foible provoked if I could help it, because you know she knows some passages—

nay, I expect all will come out—but let the mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I am discover'd.

Fain. If the worst come to the worst, I'll turn my wife to grass : I have already a deed of settlement of the best part of her estate, which I wheedled out of her ; and that you shall partake at least.

Mrs. Mar. I hope you are convinced that I hate Mirabell now ; you'll be no more jealous.

Fain. Jealous ! no, by this kiss, let husbands be jealous ; but let the lover still believe : or if he doubt, let it be only to endear his pleasure, and prepare the joy that follows, when he proves his mistress true. But let husbands' doubts convert to endless jealousy ; or if they have belief, let it corrupt to superstition, and blind credulity. I am single, and will herd no more with 'em. True, I wear the badge, but I'll disown the order. And since I take my leave of 'em, I care not if I leave 'em a common motto to their common crest.

All husbands must, or pain, or shame endure ;
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. *The same.*

Enter LADY WISHFORT and FOIBLE.

Lady W. Is sir Rowland coming, say'st thou, Foible? and are things in order?

Foi. Yes, madam. I have put wax-lights in the sconces, and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postilion to fill up the equipage.

Lady W. Have you pulvill'd the coachman and postilion, that they may not stink of the stable, when sir Rowland comes by?

Foi. Yes, madam.

Lady W. And are the dancers and the music ready, that he may be entertain'd in all points with correspondence to his passion?

Foi. All is ready, madam.

Lady W. And—well—and how do I look, Foible?

Foi. Most killing well, madam.

Lady W. Well, and how shall I receive him? in what figure shall I give his heart the first impression?

There is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit?—No, I won't sit—I'll walk—ay, I'll walk from the door upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him—no, that will be too sudden. I'll lie—ay, I'll lie down—I'll receive him in my little dressing-room. There's a couch—yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch—I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow, with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way; yes, and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start and be surprised, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder—yes—O, nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch in some confusion—It shows the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes, and re-composing airs beyond comparison. Hark! there's a coach.

Foi. 'Tis he, madam.

Lady W. O dear, has my nephew made his addresses to Millamant? I order'd him.

Foi. Sir Wilfull is set in to drinking, madam, in the parlour.

Lady W. Odds my life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go—when they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with sir Rowland.

[*Exit.*]

Enter MRS. MILLAMANT and MRS. FAINALL.

Foi. Madam, I staid here, to tell your ladyship that Mr. Mirabell has waited this half hour for an opportunity to talk with you. Though my lady's orders were to leave you and sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr. Mirabell that you are at leisure?

Mrs. Mill. No—what would the dear man have? I am thoughtful, and would amuse myself. Bid him come another time.

There never yet was woman made,
Nor shall, but to be ours'd.

[*Repeating and walking about.*]

That's hard!

Mrs. F. You are very fond of sir John Suckling to-day, Millamant, and the poets.

Mrs. Mill. He? ay, and filthy verses, so I am.

Foi. Sir Wilfull is coming, madam. Shall I send Mr. Mirabell away?

Mrs. Mill. Ay, if you please, Foible, send him away, or send him hither, just as you will, dear Foible. I think I'll see him: shall I? ay, let the wretch come—

Thyrsis a youth of the inspired train. [*Repeating.*—Dear Fainall, entertain sir Wilfull; thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool; thou art married and hast patience; I would confer with my own thoughts.

Mrs. F. I am obliged to you, that you would make me your proxy in this affair; but I have business of my own.

Enter SIR WILFULL.

Mrs. F. O sir Wilfull, you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation; pursue your point, now or never.

Sir W. Yes, my aunt will have it so: I would gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first, before I am acquainted;—but I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—that is, upon further acquaintance. [*This while Millamant walks about repeating to herself*] So for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave. If so be you'll be so kind to make my excuse, I'll return to my company.

Mrs. F. O fie, sir Wilfull! what, you must not be daunted.

Sir W. Daunted, no, that's not it, it is not so much for that; for if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient till further acquaintance, that's all—your servant.

Mrs. F. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favourable an opportunity, if I can help it. I'll leave you together, and lock the door.

[*Exeunt Mrs. Fainall and Foible.*]

Sir W. Nay, nay, cousin, I have forgot my gloves. What d'ye do? 'Sheart, a'has lock'd the door indeed, I think; nay, cousin Fainall, open the door; pshaw, what a vixen trick is this!—Nay, now a'has seen me

too—Cousin, I made bold to pass through as it were—I think this door's enchanted.

Mrs. Mill. [*Repeating*]

I pr'ythee spare me, gentle boy,
Press me no more for that slight toy.

Sir W. Anan? cousin, your servant.

Mrs. Mill. That foolish trifle of a heart——

Sir Wilfull!

Sir W. Yes—your servant. No offence I hope, cousin?

Mrs. Mill. [*Repeating*]

I swear it will not do its part,
Though thou dost thine, employ'st thy power and art.
——Natural, easy Suckling!

Sir W. Anan? Suckling? No such suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank heaven, I'm no minor.

Mrs. Mill. Ah rustic, ruder than Gothic.

Sir W. Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin; in the mean while, I must answer in plain English.

Mrs. Mill. Have you any business with me, sir Wilfull?

Sir W. Not at present, cousin. Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know if that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening; if so be that I might not be troublesome, I would have sought a walk with you.

Mrs. Mill. A walk? what then?

Sir W. Nay, nothing; only for the walk's sake, that's all.

Mrs. Mill. I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion; I-loathe the country, and every thing that relates to it.

Sir W. Indeed! hah! look ye, look ye, you do? nay, 'tis like you may: here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like, that must be confess'd indeed.

Mrs. Mill. Ah l'étourdie! I hate the town too.

Sir W. Dear heart, that's much—hah! that you should hate 'em both! hah! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away

with the country, 'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

Mrs. Mill. Ha, ha, ha! Yes, 'tis like I may. You have nothing further to say to me?

Sir W. Not at present, cousin. 'Tis like, when I have an opportunity to be more private, I may break my mind in some measure. I conjecture you partly guess; however, that's as time shall try: but spare to speak and spare to speed, as they say.

Mrs. Mill. If it is of no great importance, sir Willful, you will oblige me by leaving me. I have just now a little business.

Sir W. Enough, enough, cousin: yes, yes, all a case; when you're disposed. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now. All's one for that. Yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold, as they say—cousin, your servant. I think this door's lock'd.

Mrs. Mill. You may go this way, sir.

Sir W. Your servant: then, with your leave, I'll re-return to my company. [Exit.

Mrs. Mill. Ay, ay; ha, ha, ha!

Like Phœbus sung the no less am'rous boy.

Enter MIRABELL.

Mir. Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy—
Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? Or is this pretty artifice contrived, to signify that here the chase must end, and my pursuit be crown'd, for you can fly no further?

Mrs. Mill. Vanity! no, I'll fly and be follow'd to the last moment; though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay, and afterwards.

Mir. What, after the last?

Mrs. Mill. O, I should think I was poor, and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduced to an inglorious ease; and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation.

Mir. But do not you know, that when favours are conferr'd upon instant and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses the grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure?

Mrs. Mill. It may be in things of common application; but never sure in love. O, I hate a lover, that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature, as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air. Ah! I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

Mir. Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with only the first now, and stay for the other till after grace?

Mrs. Mill. Ah, don't be impertinent. My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? My faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay, adieu, my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, ye *douceurs*, ye *sommeils du matin*, adieu! I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible: positively, *Mirabell*, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please.

Mir. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

Mrs. Mill. Ah! idle creature, get up when you will; and d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

Mir. Names!

Mrs. Mill. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar; I shall never bear that. Good *Mirabell*, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my lady *Fadler* and sir *Francis*: nor go in public together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers; and then never be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit

together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and as well bred as if we were not married at all.

Mir. Have you any more conditions to offer? hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

Mrs. Mill. Trifles, as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please; and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance; or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please, dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

Mir. Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions, that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

Mill. You have free leave; propose your utmost; speak, and spare not.

Mir. I thank you. Imprimis then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidant, or intimate of your own sex; no she friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy-duck to wheedle you a sop-scambling to the play in a mask; then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out; and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up and prove my constancy.

Mrs. Mill. Detestable imprimis! I go to the play in a mask!

Mir. Item, I article that you continue to like your own face, as long as I shall: and while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oil'd-skins, and I know not what—hog's-bones, hare's-gall, pig-water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewoman in What-d'ye-call-it court. Item, I shut my doors against all procouresses with baskets, and pennyworths of muslin, China, fans, &c.—Item, when you shall be breeding—

Mrs. Mill. Ah! name it not.

Mir. I denounce against all straight-lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf? and instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked-billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea-table I submit; but with proviso, that you exceed not in your province; but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee. As likewise to genuine and authorized tea-table talk—such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth—But that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table, as orange-brandy, all anniseed, cinnamon, citron, and Barbadoes-waters, together with ratafia, and the most noble spirit of clary.—But for cowslip-wine, poppy-water, and all dormitives, those I allow.—These provisos admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

Mrs. Mill. O horrid provisos! filthy strong waters! I toast fellows, odious men! I hate your odious provisos.

Mir. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

Enter MRS. FAINALL.

Mrs. Mill. Fainall, what shall I do? shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Mrs. F. Ay, ay, take him, take him; what should you do?

Mrs. Mill. Well then—I'll take my death in this horrid fright—Fainall, I shall never say it—well—I think—I'll endure you.

Mrs. F. Fie, fie, have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

Mrs. Mill. Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too—well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you—I won't be kiss'd, nor I won't be thank'd—here, kiss my hand though—so hold your tongue now, don't say a word.

Mrs. F. Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience; you have neither time to talk nor stay. My mother is coming; and in my conscience if she should see you, would fall into fits, and may be not recover time enough to return to sir Rowland, who, as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed. Therefore spare your ecstasies for another occasion, and slip down the back-stairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

Mrs. Mill. Ay, go, go. In the mean time, I'll suppose you have said something to please me.

Mir. I am all obedience.

[Exit.

Mrs. F. Yonder's sir Wilfull drunk! and so noisy, that my mother has been forced to leave sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking—what they may have done by this time I know not; but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

Mrs. Mill. Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing; for I find I love him violently.

Mrs. F. So it seems; for you mind not what's said to you.—If you doubt him, you had better take up with sir Wilfull.

Mrs. Mill. How can you name that superannuated lubber? foh!

Enter WITWOULD from drinking.

Mrs. F. So, is the fray made up, that you have left 'em?

Wit. Left 'em? I could stay no longer—I have laugh'd like ten christenings—I am tipsy with laughing—If I had staid any longer, I should have burst—I must have been let out and pierced in the sides, like an unsized camel—yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *noli prosequi*, and stopt the proceedings.

Mrs. Mill. What was the dispute?

Wit. That's the jest; there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage; and so fell a sputtering at one another, like two roasting apples.

Enter PETULANT, drunk.

Now, Petulant, all's over, all's well; gad, my head begins to whim it about—why dost thou not speak? Thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

Pet. Look you, Mrs. Millamant—if you can love me, dear nymph—say it—and that's the conclusion—pass on, or pass off, that's all.

Wit. Thou hast utter'd volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto*, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah, Petulant, thou art an epitomizer of words.

Pet. Witwould—you are an annihilator of sense.

Wit. Thou art a retailer of phrases; and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions—thou art in truth (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of short-hand.

Pet. Thou art (without a figure) just one half of an ass, and Baldwin yonder, thy half-brother, is the rest—a gemini of asses split, would make just four of you.

Mrs. Mill. What was the quarrel?

Pet. There was no quarrel—there might have been a quarrel.

Wit. If there had been words enow between 'em to

have express'd provocation, they had gone together by the ears like a pair of castanets.

Pet. You were the quarrel.

Mrs. Mill. Me!

Pet. If I have the humour to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premises,—if you are not handsome, what then, if I have a humour to prove it?—if I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself—I'll go sleep.

Wit. Do, wrap thyself up like a woodlouse, and dream revenge—and hear me, if thou canst learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge—I'll carry it for thee.

Pet. Carry your mistress's monkey a spider,—go flea dogs, and read romances—I'll go to bed to my maid. [Exit.]

Mrs. F. He's horridly drunk—how came you all in this pickle?

Wit. A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight.—Your husband's advice; but he sneak'd off.

Enter SIR WILFULL, drunk, and LADY WISHFORT.

Lady W. Out upon't, out upon't! at years of discretion, and comport yourself at this rantipole rate!

Sir W. No offence, aunt.

Lady W. Offence? as I'm a person, I'm ashamed of you—fogh! how you stink of wine! d'ye think my niece will ever endure such a Borachio? you're an absolute Borachio.

Sir W. Borachio!

Lady W. At a time when you should commence an amour, and put your best foot foremost—

Sir W. 'Sheart, an you grutch me your liquor, make a bill—give me more drink, and take my purse. [Sings.]

Pr'ythee fill me the glass
'Till it laugh in my face,
With ale that is potent and mellow;
He that whines for a lass
Is an ignorant ass,
For a bumper has not its fellow.

But if you would have me marry my cousin, say the word, and I'll do't.—Wilfull will do't, that's the word,—Wilfull will do't, that's my crest—my motto I have forgot.

Lady W. My nephew's a little overtaken, cousin—but 'tis with drinking your health—O' my word, you are obliged to him—

Sir W. *In vino veritas*, aunt: if I drunk your health to day, cousin,—I am a Berachio. But if you have a mind to be married, say the word, and send for the piper; Wilfull will do't. If not, dust it away, and let's have t'other round—Tony, ods-heart, where's Tony?—Tony's an honest fellow, but he spits after a bumper, and that's a fault. [Sings.

We'll drink, and we'll never ha' done, boys.
Put the glass then around with the sun, boys.
Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he's drunk ev'ry night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he's able next morning to light us.

The sun's a good pimple, an honest soaker, he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your Antipodes—your Antipodes are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows; if I had a bumper I'd stand upon my head and drink a health to 'em.—A match or no match, cousin with the hard name?—Aunt, Wilfull will do't.

Mrs. Mill. Your pardon, madam, I can stay no longer—sir Wilfull grows very powerful. I shall be overcome if I stay. Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Mrs. Millamant and Mrs. Fainall.*]

Lady W. He would poison a tallow-chandler and his family. Beastly creature, I know not what to do with him.—Travel quoth a! ay, travel, travel, get thee gone, get thee gone, get thee but far enough, to the Saracens, or the Tartars, or the Turks—for thou art not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly pagan.

Sir W. Turks! no; no Turks, aunt; your Turks are

infidels, and believe not in the grape. Your Mahometan, your Musselman is a dry stinkard—No offence, aunt. My map says that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian—I cannot find by the map that your Mufti is orthodox—whereby it is a plain case, that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and (*hiccup*) Greek for claret. [*Sings:*

To drink is a Christian diversion,
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian :
Let Mahometan fools
Live by heathenish rules,
And be damn'd over tea-cups and coffee,
But let British lads sing,
Crown a health to the king,
And a fig for your sultan and Sophi.

Enter FOIBLE, and whispers LADY WISHFORT.

Rh, Tony!

Lady W. Sir Rowland impatient? good lack! what shall I do with this beastly tumbrill?—go lie down and sleep, you sot—or, as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinadoed with broomsticks. Call up the wenches with broomsticks.

Sir W. Ahey? wenches, where are the wenches?

Lady W. Dear cousin Witwould, get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment that invades me with some precipitation—you will oblige me to all futurity.

Wit. Come, knight—plague on him, I don't know what to say to him—will you go to a cock-match?

Sir W. With a wench, Tony?

Wit. Horrible! he has a breath like a bagpipe—Ay, ay, come will you march, my Salopian?

Sir W. Lead on, little Tony—I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tanthony; sirrah, thou shalt be my Tantonny, and I'll be thy pig.

—And a fig for your sultan and Sophi.

[*Exeunt Sir Wilfull, Witwould, and Foible.*

Lady W. This will never do. It will never make a match—at least before he has been abroad.

Enter WAITWELL, disguised as for SIR ROWLAND.

Dear sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness.—I have more pardons to ask than the pope distributes in the year of jubilee. But I hope where there is likely to be so near an alliance, we may unbend the severity of decorum—and dispense with a little ceremony.

Wait. My impatience, madam, is the effect of my transport; and till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantalized on the rack; and do but hang, madam, on the tenter of expectation.

Lady W. You have excess of gallantry, sir Rowland; and press things to a conclusion, with a most prevailing vehemence—But a day or two, for decency of marriage.

Wait. For decency of funeral, madam. The delay will break my heart—or if that should fail, I shall be poison'd. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs and poison me,—and I would willingly starve him before I die—I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction.—That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be revenged on that unnatural viper.

Lady W. Is he so unnatural, say you? truly I would contribute much both to the saving of your life, and the accomplishment of your revenge.—Not that I respect myself; though he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

Wait. Perfidious to you!

Lady W. O sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has shed, the oaths that he has sworn, the palpitations that he has felt, the trances and tremblings, the ardours and the ecstasies, the kneelings and the risings, the heart-heavings and the hand-gripings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his protesting eyes! Oh, no memory can register.

Wait. What, my rival! is the rebel my rival? a'dies.

Lady W. No, don't kill him at once, sir Rowland; starve him gradually, inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be barefoot;

in a month out at knees with begging an alms—he shall starve upward and upward, till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out like a candle's end upon a saveall.

Lady W. Well, sir Rowland, you have the way—you are no novice in the labyrinth of love—you have the clue—But as I am a person, sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding to any sinister appetite, or indigestion of widowhood nor impute my complacency to any lethargy of continence—I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials.

Wait. Far be it from me—

Lady W. If you do, I protest I must recede, or think that I have made a prostitution of decorums; but in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance—

Wait. I esteem it so—

Lady W. Or else you wrong my condescension.

Wait. I do not, I do not—

Lady W. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair shrine of virtue.

Lady W. If you think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient—

Wait. Dear madam, no. You are all camphire and frankincense, all chastity and odour.

Lady W. Or that—

Enter FOIBLE.

Foi. Madam, the dancers are ready, and there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

Lady W. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person who would suffer racks in honour's cause, dear sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly. [Exit.

Wait. Fie, fie!—What a slavery have I undergone! Spouse, hast thou any oordial? I want spirits.

Foi. What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady!

Wait. O, she is the antidote to desire. By this hand, I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days—than act sir Rowland till this time to-morrow.

Enter LADY WISHFORT, with a Letter.

Lady W. Call in the dancers;—sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the entertainment. [*Dance.*] Now with your permission, sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter—I would open it in your presenee, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy I would burn it—speak if it does—but you may see, the superscription is like a woman's hand.

Foi. By heaven! Mrs. Marwood's. I know it. My heart aches—get it from her. [*To him.*]

Wait. A woman's hand? No, madam, that's no woman's hand, I see that already. That's somebody whose throat must be cut.

Lady W. Nay, sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make a return, by a frank communication—You shall see it—we'll open it together—look you here. [*Reads*]—*Madam, though unknown to you—Look you there, 'tis from nobody that I know.—I have that honour for your character, that I think myself obliged to let you know you are abused. He who pretends to be sir Rowland is a cheat and a rascal—O heavens! what's this?*

Foi. Unfortunate, all's ruin'd!

Wait. How, how! let me see, let me see—reading, *A rascal and disguised, and suborn'd for that imposture—O villany! O villany!—By the contrivance of—*

Lady W. I shall faint, I shall die, ho!

Foi. Say 'tis your nephew's hand.—Quickly, his plot, swear it, swear it.

Wait. Here's a villain! madam; don't you perceive it, don't you see it?

Lady W. Too well, too well. I have seen too much.

Wait. I told you at first I knew the hand—A woman's hand? The rascal writes a sort of a large hand; your

Roman hand—I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him.

Foi. O treachery! But are you sure, sir Rowland, it is his writing?

Wait. Sure? Am I here? Do I live? Do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him, in the same character.

Lady W. How!

Foi. O what luck it is, sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture! this was the business that brought Mr. Mirabell disguised to madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me and would have hid his face.

Lady W. How, how!—I heard the villain was in the house indeed; and now I remember, my niece went away abruptly, when sir Wilfull was to have made his addresses.

Foi. Then, then, madam, Mr. Mirabell waited for her in her chamber; but I would not tell your ladyship, to discompose you when you were to receive sir Rowland.

Wait. Enough, his date is short.

Foi. No, good sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

Wait. Law! I care not for law. I can but die, and 'tis in a good cause—My lady shall be satisfied of my truth and innocence, though it cost me my life.

Lady W. No, dear sir Rowland, don't fight; if you should be killed I must never show my face; or hang'd—O consider my reputation, sir Rowland—No, you shan't fight—I'll go in and examine my niece; I'll make her confess. I conjure you, sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

Wait. I am charm'd, madam; I obey. But some proof you must let me give you;—I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

Lady W. Ay, dear sir Rowland, that will be some comfort; bring the black box.

Wait. And may I presume to bring a contract to be sign'd this night? May I hope so far?

Lady W. Bring what you will; but come alive, pray come alive. O this is a happy discovery.

Wait. Dead or alive I'll come—and married we will be in spite of treachery. Come, my buxom widow:

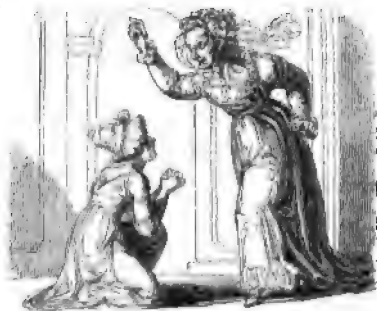
Ere long you shall substantial proof receive

That I'm an arrant knight——

Foi. Or arrant knave.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. *The same.*

LADY WISHFORT and FOIBLE.

Lady W. Out of my house, out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent, that I have foster'd; thou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing—Begone, begone, begone, go, go—That I took from washing of old gauze and weaving of dead hair, with a bleak blue nose, over a chaffing-dish of starved embers, and dining behind a traverse-rag, in a shop no bigger than a bird-cage,—go, go, starve again, do, do.

Foi. Dear madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

Lady W. Away, out, out, go set up for yourself again—do, drive a trade, do, with your three-pennyworth of small ware, flaunting upon a pack-thread, under a brandyseller's bulk, or against a dead wall by a ballad-monger. Go, hang out an old frisoner-gorget, with a yard of yellow colberteen again; do; an old gnaw'd mask, two rows of pins, and a child's fiddle; a glass necklace, with the beads broken, and a quilted night-cap with one ear. Go, go, drive a trade.—These were

your commodities, you treacherous trull; this was the merchandize you dealt in, when I took you into my house, placed you next myself, and made you governante of my whole family. You have forgot this, have you, now you have feathered your nest?

Foi. No, no, dear madam. Do but hear me, have but a moment's patience—I'll confess all. Mr. Mirabell seduced me; I am not the first that he has wheedled with his dissembling tongue; your ladyship's own wisdom has been deluded by him, then how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? O madam, if you knew but what he promised me, and how he assured me your ladyship should come to no damage—or else the wealth of the Indies should not have bribed me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a lady as you have been to me.

Lady W. No damage! What, to betray me, and marry me to a cast serving-man? No damage! O thou frontless impudence!

Foi. Pray do but hear me, madam! he could not marry your ladyship, madam—no, indeed, his marriage was to have been void in law; for he was married to me first, to secure your ladyship. Yes, indeed, I inquired of the law in that case before I would meddle or make.

Lady W. What, then I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it seems,—while you were catering for Mirabell, I have been broker for you? This exceeds all precedent; I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews! I'll couple you. Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander. I'll Duke's-place you, as I'm a person. Your turtle is in custody already: you shall coo in the same cage, if there be a constable or warrant in the parish. [Exit.

Foi. O that ever I was born! O that I was ever married!—a bride, ay, I shall be a Bridewell bride, oh!

Enter MRS. FAINALL.

Mrs. F. Poor Foible, what's the matter?

Foi. O madam, my lady's gone for a constable; I shall be had to a justice, and put to Bridewell to beat hemp; poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

Mrs. F. Have a good heart, Foible; Mirabell's gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

Foi. Yes, yes, I know it, madam; she was in my lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my lady; and that missing effect, Mr. Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers; and in the mean time Mrs. Marwood declared all to my lady.

Mrs. F. Was there no mention made of me in the letter?—My mother does not suspect my being in the confederacy; I fancy Marwood has not told her, though she has told my husband.

Foi. Yes, madam; but my lady did not see that part: we stifled the letter before she read so far. Has that mischievous devil told Mr. Fainall of your ladyship then?

Mrs. F. Ay, all's out; my affair with Mirabell, every thing discovered. This is the last day of our living together, that's my comfort.

Foi. Indeed! madam; and so 'tis a comfort if you knew all—he has been even with your ladyship; which I could have told you long enough since, but I love to keep peace and quietness by my good will: I had rather bring friends together, than set them at distance. But Mrs. Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

Mrs. F. Say'st thou so, Foible? Canst thou prove this?

Foi. I can take my oath of it, madam, so can Mrs. Mincing; we have had many a fair word from madam Marwood, to conceal something that passed in our chamber one evening when we were at Hyde-park;—

and we were thought to have gone a walking: but we went up unawares—though we were sworn to secrecy too; madam Marwood took a book and swore us both upon it: but it was but a book of poems. So long as it was not a Bible oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

Mrs. F. This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish—Now, Mincing!

Enter MINCING.

Min. My lady would speak with Mrs. Foible, mem. Mr. Mirabell is with her; he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs. Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my lady's closet, till my old lady's anger is abated. O, my old lady is in a perilous passion, at something Mr. Fainall has said; he swears, and my old lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, mem, how that he'll have my lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

Mrs. F. Does your lady or Mirabell know that?

Min. Yes, mem, they have sent me to see if sir Willfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My lady is resolved to have him, I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pounds. O, come Mrs. Foible, I hear my old lady.

Mrs. F. Foible, you must tell Mincing, that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

Foi. Yes, yes, madam.

Min. O, yes, mem, I'll vouch any thing for your ladyship's service, be what it will.

[Exeunt Foible and Mincing.]

Enter LADY WISHFORT and MRS. MARWOOD.

Lady W. O my dear friend, how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness? To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell; to you I owe the detection of the impostor sir Rowland: and now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honour of my house, and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad

world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves, and be shepherdesses.

Mrs. Mar. Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, madam. We shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concern'd in the treaty.

Lady W. O daughter, daughter, is it possible thou shouldst be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and, as I may say, another me, and yet transgress the minute particle of severe virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mould of virtue?

Mrs. F. I don't understand your ladyship.

Lady W. Not understand! why, have you not been naught? have you not been sophisticated?—not understand? here I am ruined to compound for your caprices; I must part with my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough——

Mrs. F. I am wrong'd and abused, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation; as false as your friend there, ay, or your friend's friend, my false husband.

Mrs. Mar. My friend, Mrs. Fainall? your husband my friend! what do you mean?

Mrs. F. I know what I mean, madam, and so do you; and so shall the world at a time convenient.

Mrs. Mar. I am sorry to see you so passionate, madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal to serve your ladyship and family should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, madam, if I meddle no more with an affair, in which I am not personally concern'd.

Lady W. O dear friend, I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns;—you ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature; she deserves more from you, than all your life can accomplish—O don't leave me destitute in this perplexity;—no, stick to me, my good genius.

Mrs. F. I tell you, madam, you're abused—Stick to

you? ay, like a leach, to suck your best blood—she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter, in composition for me. I defy 'em all. Let 'em prove their aspersions: I know my own innocence, and dare stand a trial.

[Exit.

Lady W. Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wrong'd after all, ha? I don't know what to think—and I promise you, her education has been very unexceptionable—I may say it; for I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impress upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to the very sight of men—ay, friend, she would ha' shriek'd if she had but seen a man, till she was in her teens. As I'm a person 'tis true.—She was never suffer'd to play with a male-child, though but in coats; nay, her very babies were of the feminine gender.—O, she never look'd a man in the face, but her own father, or the chaplain; and him we made a shift to put upon her for a woman, by the help of his long garments and his sleek face; till she was going in her fifteen.

Mrs. Mar. 'Twas much she should be deceived so long.

Lady W. I warrant you, or she would never have borne to have been catechized by him; and have heard his long lectures against singing and dancing, and such debaucheries; and going to filthy plays, and profane music-meetings. O, she would have swoon'd at the sight or name of an obscene play-book—and can I think, after all this, that my daughter can be naught? What, a whore? and thought it excommunication to set her foot within the door of a playhouse. O dear friend, I can't believe it. No, no; as she says, let him prove it, let him prove it.

Mrs. Mar. Prove it, madam? what, and have your name prostituted in a public court; yours and your daughter's reputation worried at the bar by a pack of bawling lawyers! to be ushered in with an O-yes of scandal; and have your case opened by an old fumbler

in a coif like a man-midwife, to bring your daughter's infamy to light; to be a theme for legal punsters, and quibblers by the statute; and become a jest, against a rule of court, where there is no precedent for a jest in any record; not even in Doomsday-book; to discompose the gravity of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in more naughty law Latin.

Lady W. O, 'tis very hard!

Mrs. Mar. And then to have my young revellers of the Temple take notes, like 'prentices at a conventicle; and after talk it over again in commons, or before drawers in an eating-house.

Lady W. Worse and worse.

Mrs. Mar. Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here 'twere well. But it must after this be consign'd by the short-hand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferr'd to the hands, nay, into the throats and lungs of hawkers, with voices more licentious than the loud flounder-man's: and this you must hear till you are stunn'd; nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

Lady W. O, 'tis insupportable! No, no, dear friend, make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll compound. I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all—any thing, every thing, for composition.

Mrs. Mar. Nay, madam, I advise nothing; I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniences which perhaps you have overseen. Here comes Mr. Fainall; if he will be satisfied to huddle up all in silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than condole with you.

Enter FAINALL.

Lady W. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood: no, no, I do not doubt it.

Fain. Well, madam; I have suffer'd myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady your friend; and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life; on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

Lady W. Never to marry!

Fain. No more sir Rowlands—the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

Mrs. Mar. That condition, I dare answer, my lady will consent to, without difficulty; she has already but too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Besides, madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude, we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

Lady W. Ay, that's true.

Fain. Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already; and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

Lady W. This is most inhumanly savage; exceeding the barbarity of a Muscovite husband.

Fain. I learn'd it from his czarish majesty's retinue, in a winter evening's conference over brandy and pepper, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy, as they are at present practised in the northern hemisphere. But this must be agreed unto, and that positively. Lastly, I will be endow'd, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pounds, which is the moiety of Mrs. Millamant's fortune in your possession; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and testament of your deceased husband, sir Jonathan Wishfort), by her disobedience in contracting herself against your consent or knowledge; and by refusing the offer'd match with sir Wilfull Witwoud, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

Lady W. My nephew was *non compos*, and could not make his addresses.

Fain. I come to make demands—I'll hear no objections.

Lady W. You will grant me time to consider?

Fain. Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand till more sufficient deeds can be perfected, which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the mean while I will go for the said instrument, and till my return you may balance this matter in your own discretion. *[Exit.]*

Lady W. This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel; must I be subject to this merciless villain?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis severe indeed, madam, that you should smart for your daughter's failings.

Lady W. 'Twas against my consent that she married this barbarian; but she would have him, though her year was not out—Ah! her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is match'd now with a witness—I shall be mad, dear friend; is there no comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this rebel-rate?—Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues too.

Enter MRS. MILLAMANT and SIR WILFULL.

Sir W. Aunt, your servant.

Lady W. Out, caterpillar! call not me aunt; I know thee not.

Sir W. I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say,—'Sheart! and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I committed no offence, aunt—and if I did I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke any thing I'll pay for't, an it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you, I'm willing to marry my cousin. So pray let's all be friends; she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

Lady W. How's this, dear niece? have I any comfort? can this be true?

Mrs. Mill. I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, madam; and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you were misinform'd, I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be a witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and for the contract that pass'd between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your ladyship's presence;—he is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

Lady W. Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit

that traitor—I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a Gorgon; if I see him, I fear I shall turn to stone, and petrify incessantly.

Mrs. Mill. If you disoblige him, he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

Lady W. Are you sure it will be the last time?—if I were sure of that—shall I never see him again?

Mrs. Mill. Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

Sir W. 'Sheart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman, aunt, let him come in; why we are sworn brothers and fellow-travellers. We are to be Pylades and Orestes, he and I; he is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been over-seas once already: and with proviso that I marry my cousin, will cross 'em once again, only to bear me company. 'Sheart, I'll call him in—an I set on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him.

[*Goes to the Door and hems.*]

Mrs. Mar. This is precious fooling, if it would pass; but I'll know the bottom of it.

Lady W. O, dear Marwood, you are not going?

Mrs. Mar. Not far, madam; I'll return immediately.

[*Exit.*]

Enter MIRABELL.

Sir W. Look up, man, I'll stand by you; 'sbud, an she do frown, she can't kill you; besides, harkee, she dare not frown desperately, because her face is none of her own; 'sheart, and she should, her forehead would wrinkle like the coat of a cream-cheese; but mum for that, fellow-traveller.

Mir. If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offer'd to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse, and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion, I am too happy. Ah, madam, there was a time, but let it be forgotten; I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high place I once held, of sighing at your feet; nay, kill me not, by turning from me in disdain,

I come not to plead for favour; nay, not for pardon; I am a suppliant only for pity, I am going where I never shall behold you more.

Sir W. How, fellow-traveller! you shall go by yourself then.

Mir. Let me be pitied first, and afterwards forgotten: I ask no more.

Sir W. By'r lady a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, aunt. Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt; why you must, an you are a Christian.

Mir. Consider, madam, in reality, you could not receive much prejudice; it was an innocent device, though I confess it had a face of guiltiness; it was at most an artifice which love contrived; and errors which love produces have ever been accounted venial. At least, think it is punishment enough, that I have lost what in my heart I hold most dear; that to your cruel indignation I have offer'd up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet; nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

Sir W. An he does not move me, would I may never be o'the quorum. An it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again, I would I might never take shipping. Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that. My contract went no farther than a little mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry; one doleful sigh more from my fellow-traveller, and 'tis dissolved.

Lady W. Well, nephew, upon your account—ah, he has a false, insinuating tongue. Well, sir, I will stifle my just resentment, at my nephew's request; I will endeavour what I can to forget, but on proviso that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

Mir. It is in writing, and with papers of concern; but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

Lady W. Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue: when I did not see him, I could have bribed a villain to his assassination; but his appearance rakes

the embers which have so long lain smother'd in my breast.

[*Aside.*

Enter FAINALL and MRS. MARWOOD.

Fain. Your debate of deliberation, madam, is expired. Here is the instrument, are you prepar'd to sign?

Lady W. If I were prepared, I am not empower'd. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having match'd herself by my direction to sir Wilfull.

Fain. That sham is too gross to pass on me; though 'tis imposed on you, madam.

Mrs. Mill. Sir, I have given my consent.

Mir. And, sir, I have resign'd my pretensions.

Sir W. And, sir, I assert my right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, sir, and of your instrument. 'Sheart, an you talk of an instrument, sir, I have an old fox by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, sir. It thall not be sufficient for a mittimus, or a tailor's measure; therefore withdraw your instrument, or by'r lady I shall draw mine.

Lady W. Hold, nephew, hold.

Mrs. Mill. Good sir Wilfull, respite your valour.

Fain. Indeed! are you provided of your guard, with your single beef-eater there? But I am prepared for you; and insist upon my first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use; as pursuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant. I suppose, madam, your consent is not requisite in this case; nor, Mr. Mirabell, your resignation; nor, sir Wilfull, your right: you may draw your fox if you please, sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else; for here it will not avail. This, my lady Wishfort, must be subscribed, or your darling daughter's turn'd adrift, to sink or swim, as she and the current of this lewd town can agree.

Lady W. Is there no means, no remedy, to stop my ruin? Ungrateful wretch! Dost thou not owe thy being, thy subsistence to my daughter's fortune?

Fain. I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my possession.

Mir. But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands—I own I have not deserved you should owe any obligation to me; or else perhaps I could advise.

Lady W. O, what? what? to save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to any thing, to come, to be deliver'd from this tyranny.

Mir. Ay, madam; but that is too late, my reward is intercepted. You have disposed of her, who only could have made me a compensation for all my services; but be it as it may, I am resolved I'll serve you; you shall not be wrong'd in this savage manner.

Lady W. How! dear Mr. Mirabell, can you be so generous at last! but it is not possible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match; you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

Mir. Will you? I take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

Lady W. Ay, ay, any body, any body.

Mir. Foible is one, and a penitent.

Enter MRS. FAINALL, FOIBLE, and MINCING.

Mrs. Mar. O, my shame! [*Mirabell and Lady Wishfort go to Mrs. Fainall and Foible*] these corrupt things are brought hither to expose me. [*To Fainall.*

Fain. If it must all come out, why let 'em know it, 'tis but the Way of the World. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will insist the more.

Foi. Yes indeed, madam, I'll take my Bible oath of it.

Min. And so will I, mem.

Lady W. O Marwood, Marwood, art thou false! My friend deceive me! hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

Mrs. Mar. Have you so much ingratitude and in-

justice, to give credit against your friend, to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

Min. Mercenary, mem! I scorn your words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr. Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Messalina's poems. Mercenary! no, if we would have been mercenary, we should have held our tongues; you would have bribed us sufficiently.

Fain. Go, you are an insignificant thing. Well, what are you the better for this? Is this Mr. Mirabell's expedient? I'll be put off no longer; you, thing, that was a wife, shall smart for this.

Mrs. F. I despise you, and defy your malice; you have aspersed me wrongfully; I have proved your falsehood; go you and your treacherous—I will not name it, but starve together, perish.

Fain. Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear; madam, I'll be fool'd no longer.

Lady W. Ah, Mr. Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

Mir. O, in good time. Your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, madam.

Enter WAITWELL, with a Box of Writings.

Lady W. O sir Rowland—Well, rascal.

Wait. What your ladyship pleases. I have brought the black box at last, madam.

Mir. Give it me, madam; you remember your promise.

Lady W. Ay, dear sir.

Mir. Where are the gentlemen?

Wait. At hand, sir, rubbing their eyes—just risen from sleep.

Fain. 'Sdeath! what's this to me? I'll not wait your private concerns.

Enter PETULANT and WITWOULD.

Pet. How now? what's the matter? whose hand's out?

Wit. Hey-day! what, are you all together, like
— at the end of the last act?

Mir. You may remember gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

Wit. Ay, I do, my hand I remember—Petulant set his mark.

Mir. You wrong him, his name is fairly written, as shall appear. You do not remember, gentlemen, any thing of what that parchment contained.

[*Undoing the Box.*]

Wit. No.

Pet. Not I. I writ, I read nothing.

Mir. Very well, now you shall know. Madam, your promise.

Lady W. Ay, ay, sir, upon my honour.

Mir. Mr. Fainall, it is now time that you should know, that your lady, while she was at her own disposal, and before you had by your insinuations wheedled her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune—

Fain. Sir! pretended!

Mir. Yes, sir, I say, that this lady, while a widow, having it seems received some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, which, from her own partial opinion and fondness of you, she could never have suspected—she did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends, and of sages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this same as her act and deed to me in trust, and to the uses within mentioned. You may read if you please, [*Holding out the Parchment*] though perhaps what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

Fain. Very likely, sir. What's here? Damnation! [*Reads*] *A deed of conveyance of the whole estate real of Arabella Languish, widow, in trust to Edward Mirabell.*—Confusion!

Mir. Even so, sir; 'tis *The Way of the World*, sir; of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

Fain. Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be reveng'd.

[*Offers to run at Mrs. Fainall.*]

Sir W. Hold, sir; now you may make your bearing flourish somewhere else, sir.

Fain. Mirabell, you shall hear of this, sir; be sure you shall. Let me pass, oaf. *[Exit.]*

Mrs. F. Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment: you had better give it vent.

Mrs. Mar. Yes, it shall have vent, and to your confusion, or I'll perish in the attempt. *[Exit.]*

Lady W. O daughter, daughter, 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

Mrs. F. Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

Lady W. Well, Mr. Mirabell, you have kept your promise, and I must perform mine. First, I pardon, for your sake, sir Rowland there and Foible. The next thing is to break the matter to my nephew; and how to do that——

Mir. For that, madam, give yourself no trouble; let me have your consent; sir Wilful is my friend; he has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engaged a volunteer in this action for our service; and now designs to prosecute his travels.

Sir W. 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her, and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my resolution is to see foreign parts; I have set on't, and when I'm set on't, I must do't. And if these two gentlemen would travel too, I think they may be spared.

Pet. For my part, I say little; I think things are best; off or on.

Wait. I'gad, I understand nothing of the matter; I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-school.

Lady W. Well, sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

Mrs. Mill. Why does not the man take me? Would you have me give myself to you over again?

Mir. Ay, and over and over again. *[Kisses her Hand]* I would have you as often as possibly I can. Well, heaven grant I love you not too well, that's all my fear.

Sir W. 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're married; or if you will toy now, let us have a dance in the mean time; that we who are not lovers may have some other employment, besides looking on.

Mir. With all my heart, dear sir Wilful. What shall we do for music?

Foi. O, sir, some that were provided for sir Rowland's entertainment are yet within call. [*A Dance.*]

Lady W. As I am a person, I can hold out no longer; I have wasted my spirits so to-day already, that I am ready to sink under the fatigue: and I cannot but have some fears upon me yet, that my son Fainall will pursue some desperate course.

Mir. Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account; to my knowledge his circumstances are such, he must of force comply. For my part, I will contribute all that in me lies to a re-union: in the mean time, madam, [To Mrs. Fainall] let me before these witnesses restore to you this deed of trust; it may be a means, well managed, to make you live easily together.

From hence let those be warn'd, who mean to wed,
Lest mutual falsehood stain the bridal-bed:
For each deceiver to his cost may find,
That marriage frauds too oft are paid in kind.

[*Excunt.*]

EPILOGUE.

AFTER our *Epilogue* this crowd dismisses,
I'm thinking how this play'll be pull'd to pieces.
But pray consider, ere you doom its fall,
How hard a thing 'twould be to please you all.
There are some critics so with spleen diseas'd,
They scarcely come inclining to be pleas'd :
And sure he must have more than mortal skill,
Who pleases any one against his will.
Then, all bad poets we are sure are foes,
And how their number's swell'd, the town well knows ;
In shoals I've mark'd 'em judging in the pit ;
Though they're on no pretence for judgment fit,
But that they have been damn'd for want of wit. }
Since when, they, by their own offences taught,
Set up for spies on plays, and finding fault,
Others there are whose malice we'd prevent ; }
Such, who watch plays, with scurrilous intent,
To mark out who by *characters* are meant :
And though no perfect likeness they can trace ;
Yet each pretends to know the *copy'd face*.
These, with false glosses feed their own ill-nature,
And turn to *libel* what was meant a *satire*.
May such malicious *fops* this fortune find,
To think themselves alone the *fools* design'd :
If any are so arrogantly vain, }
To think they *singly* can support a *scene*,
And furnish *fool* enough to entertain. }
For well the learn'd and the judicious know,
That *satire* scorns to stoop so meanly low,
As any *one abstracted fop* to show. }
For, as when painters form a matchless face,
They from each *fair-one* catch some diff'rent grace ;
And shining features in one portrait blend,
To which no single beauty must pretend :
So poets oft do in one piece expose
Whole *belles-assemblées* of *coquettes* and *beaux*.

THE
WEST INDIAN.

A Comedy.

BY RICHARD CUMBERLAND, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

Author of several Dramatic Pieces: and

PROMPTER OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

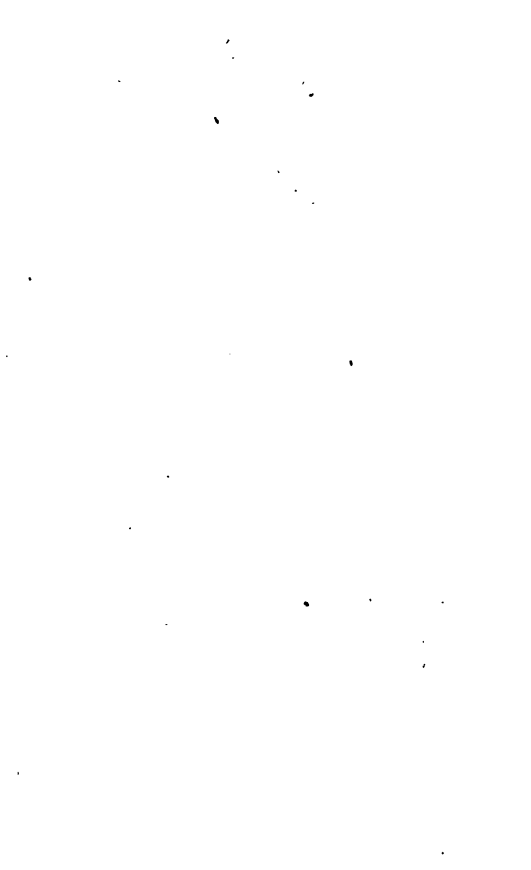


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**FOR WHITTINGHAM AND ARLISS, PATERNOSTER
ROW, LONDON.**

1814.



THE WEST INDIAN,

THE fifth composition of Mr. Cumberland in chronological order, and the first in merit, was produced in 1771: nor have three-and-forty years in the least abated the degree of popularity its original representation acquired, and which will preserve it a lasting monument of the author's genius.

A difference of some years standing, between Mr. Cumberland and Mr. Garrick, happily terminated on the production of this Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally acted.

<i>Stockwell</i>	Mr. Aickin.
<i>Belcour</i>	Mr. King.
<i>Captain Dudley</i>	Mr. Packer.
<i>Charles Dudley</i>	Mr. Cantherley.
<i>Major O'Flaherty</i>	Mr. Moody.
<i>Stukely</i>	Mr. J. Aickin.
<i>Fulmer</i>	Mr. Baddeley.
<i>Varland</i>	Mr. Parsons.
<i>Servant to Stockwell</i>	Mr. Wheeler.
<i>Lady Rusport</i>	Mrs. Hopkins.
<i>Charlotte Rusport</i>	Mrs. Abington.
<i>Louisa Dudley</i>	Mrs. Baddeley.
<i>Mrs. Fulmer</i>	Mrs. Egerton.
<i>Lucy</i>	Mrs. Love.
<i>Housekeeper</i>	Mrs. Bradshaw.

1814.
Drury Lane.

1807-8.
Covent Garden.

<i>Stockwell</i>	Mr. Powell.	Mr. Murray.
<i>Belcour</i>	Mr. Elliston.	Mr. Jones.
<i>Major O'Flaherty</i>	Mr. Johnstone.	Mr. Hamerton.
<i>Captain Dudley</i>	Mr. Carr.	Mr. Creswell.
<i>Charles Dudley</i>	Mr. J. Wallack.	Mr. Brunton.
<i>Varland</i>	Mr. Knight.	Mr. Blanchard.
<i>Stukely</i>	Mr. Maddocks.	Mr. Thompson.
<i>Fulmer</i>	Mr. Penley.	Mr. Simmons.
<i>Servants</i>	{ Mr. West.	Mr. Holland.
	{ Mr. Lee.	Mr. W. Murray.
<i>Sailors</i>	{ Mr. Evans.	Mr. Jefferies.
	{ Mr. Appleby.	
<i>Lady Rusport</i>	Mrs. Sparks.	Mrs. Mattocks.
<i>Charlotte Rusport</i>	Mrs. Davison.	Mrs. C. Kemble.
<i>Louisa Dudley</i>	Miss Boyce.	Miss Norton.
<i>Mrs. Fulmer</i>	Miss Tidswell.	Mrs. Dibdin.
<i>Lucy</i>	Mrs. Scott.	Miss Logan.
<i>Housekeeper</i>	Mrs. Chatterley.	Mrs. Emery.

SCENE, London.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *A Merchant's Counting-house.*

In an inner Room, set off by glass Doors, are discovered several Clerks, employed at their Desks. A Writing Table in the front Room. STOCKWELL is discovered reading a Letter; STUKELY comes gently out of the back Room, and observes him some Time before he speaks.

Stuke. **H**E seems disordered: something in that letter; and, I'm afraid, of an unpleasant sort.—He has many ventures of great account at sea; a ship richly freighted for Barcelona; another for Lisbon; and others expected from Cadiz, of still greater value. Besides these, I know he has many deep concerns in foreign bottoms, and underwritings to a vast amount. I'll accost him—Sir—Mr. Stockwell!

Stock. Stukely!—Well, have you shipped the cloths?

Stuke. I have, sir; here's the bill of lading, and copy of the invoice; the assortments are all compared: Mr. Traffic will give you the policy upon 'Change.

Stock. 'Tis very well—lay these papers by; and no more business for awhile. Shut the door, Stukely; I have had long proof of your friendship and fidelity to me; a matter of most intimate concern lies on my mind, and 'twill be a sensible relief to unbosom myself to you; I have just now been informed of the arrival of the young West Indian, I have so long been expecting—you know whom I mean?

Stuke. Yes, sir; Mr. Belcour, the young gentleman, who inherited old Belcour's great estate in Jamaica.

Stock. Hush! not so loud; come a little nearer this way. This Belcour is now in London; part of his baggage is already arrived, and I expect him every minute. Is it to be wondered at, if his coming throws me into some agitation, when I tell you, Stukely, he is my son?

Stuke. Your son!

Stock. Yes, sir, my only son. Early in life, I accompanied his grandfather to Jamaica as his clerk; he had an only daughter, somewhat older than myself; the mother of this gentleman: it was my chance (call it good or ill) to engage her affections; and, as the inferiority of my condition made it hopeless to expect her father's consent, her fondness provided an expedient, and we were privately married; the issue of that concealed engagement is, as I have told you, this Belcour.

Stuke. That event surely discovered your connexion.

Stock. You shall hear. Not many days after our marriage, old Belcour set out for England; and, during his abode here, my wife was, with great secrecy, delivered of this son. Fruitful in expedients to disguise her situation without parting from her infant, she contrived to have it laid and received at her door as a foundling. After some time her father returned, having left me here; in one of those favourable moments that decide the fortunes of prosperous men, this child was introduced; from that instant he treated him as his own, gave him his name, and brought him up in his family.

Old Belcour is dead, and has bequeathed his whole estate to him we are speaking of.

Stuke. Now then you are no longer bound to secrecy.

Stock. True: but before I publicly reveal myself, I could wish to make some experiment of my son's disposition: this can only be done by letting his spirit take its course without restraint; by these means, I think I shall discover much more of his real character under the title of his merchant, than I should under that of his father.

Enter a Sailor, ushering in several Black Servants, carrying Portmanteaus, Trunks, &c.

Sail. 'Save your honour! is your name Stockwell, pray?

Stock. It is.

Sail. Part of my master Belcour's baggage, an't please you: there's another cargo not far a-stern of us; and the coxswain has got charge of the dumb creatures.

Stock. Pr'ythee, friend, what dumb creatures do you speak of; has Mr. Belcour brought over a collection of wild beasts?

Sail. No, lord love him; no, not he; let me see; there's two green monkeys, a pair of grey parrots, a Jamaica sow and pigs, and a Mangrove dog; that's all.

Stock. Is that all?

Sail. Yes, your honour: Yes, that's all; bless his heart, a' might have brought over the whole island if he would; a' didn't leave a dry eye in it.

Stock. Indeed! Stakely, show them where to bestow their baggage. Follow that gentleman.

Sail. Come, bear a hand, my lads, bear a hand.

[Exit, with Stukely and Servants.]

Stock. If the principal tallies with his purveyors, he must be a singular spectacle in this place: he has a friend, however, in this sea-faring fellow; 'tis no bad prognostic of a man's heart, when his shipmates give him a good word.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. *A Drawing-room.**Enter Housekeeper and Servant.*

Housek. Why, what a fuss does our good master put himself in about this West Indian! see what a bill of fare I've been forced to draw out; seven and nine, I'll assure you, and only a family dinner, as he calls it: why, if my lord mayor was expected, there couldn't be a greater to-do about him.

Serv. I wish to my heart you had but seen the loads of trunks, boxes, and portmanteaus, he has sent hither. An ambassador's baggage, with all the smuggled goods of his family, does not exceed it.

Housek. A fine pickle he'll put the house into: had he been master's own son, and a Christian Englishman, there could not be more rout than there is about this Creolian, as they call them.

Serv. No matter for that; he's very rich, and that's sufficient. They say, he has rum and sugar enough belonging to him, to make all the water in the Thames into punch. But I see my master's coming.

*[Exit Housekeeper.]**Enter STOCKWELL.*

Stock. Where is Mr. Belcour? Who brought this note from him?

Serv. A waiter from the London Tavern, sir; he says, the young gentleman is just dressed, and will be with you directly.

Stock. Show him in when he arrives.

Serv. I shall, sir. I'll have a peep at him first, however; I've a great mind to see this outlandish spark. The sailor fellow says, he'll make rare doings amongst us.

[Aside.]

Stock. You need not wait; leave me. *[Exit Servant]*
Let me see.

[Reads.]

Sir,—I write to you under the hands of the hair-dresser; as soon as I have made myself decent, and slipped on some fresh clothes, I will have the honour of paying you my devoirs. Yours,
BELCOUR.

He writes at his ease ;— for he's unconscious to whom his letter is addressed ; but what a palpitation does it throw my heart into ; a father's heart ! All the reports I ever received give me favourable impressions of his character, wild, perhaps, as the manner of his country is, but, I trust, not frantic or unprincipled.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, the foreign gentleman is come. [Exit.

Enter BELCOUR.

Stock. Mr. Belcour, I am rejoiced to see you ; you are welcome to England !

Bel. I thank you heartily, good Mr. Stockwell ; you and I have long conversed at a distance ; now we are met ; and the pleasure this meeting gives me, amply compensates for the perils I have run through in accomplishing it.

Stock. What perils, Mr. Belcour ? I could not have thought you would have made a bad passage at this time o'year.

Bel. Nor did we : courier like, we came posting to your shores, upon the pinions of the swiftest gales that ever blew ; 'tis upon English ground all my difficulties have arisen ; 'tis the passage from the river side I complain of.

Stock. Ay, indeed ! What obstructions can you have met between this and the river side ?

Bel. Innumerable ! Your town is as full of defiles as the island of Corsica, and I believe they are as obstinately defended ; so much hurry, bustle, and confusion, on your quays : so many sugar casks, porter butts, and common council men, in your streets, that unless a man marched with artillery in his front, 'tis more than the labour of Hercules can effect, to make any tolerable way through your town.

Stock. I am sorry you have been so incommoded.

Bel. Why, 'faith 'twas all my own fault ; accustomed to a land of slaves, and out of patience with the whole tribe of custom-house extortioners, boatmen, tide-

waiters and water-bailiffs, that beset me on all sides, worse than a swarm of musquitoes, I proceeded a little too roughly to brush them away with my rattan; the sturdy rogues took this in dudgeon, and beginning to rebel, the mob chose different sides, and a furious scuffle ensued; in the course of which, my person and apparel suffered so much, that I was obliged to step into the first tavern to refit, before I could make my approaches in any decent trim.

Stock. All without is as I wish; dear nature, add the rest, I am happy. [*Aside*] Well, Mr. Belcour, 'tis a rough sample you have had of my countrymen's spirit; but, I trust, you'll not think the worse of them for it.

Bel. Not at all, not at all; I like them the better. Was I only a visitor, I might, perhaps, wish them a little more tractable; but, as a fellow subject, and a sharer in their freedom, I applaud their spirit, though I feel the effects of it in every bone of my skin.

Stock. That's well; I like that well. How gladly I could fall upon his neck, and own myself his father!

[*Aside.*

Bel. Well, Mr. Stockwell, for the first time in my life, here am I in England; at the fountain head of pleasure, in the land of beauty, of arts, and elegancies. My happy stars have given me a good estate, and the conspiring winds have blown me hither to spend it.

Stock. To use it, not to waste it, I should hope; to treat it, Mr. Belcour, not as a vassal, over whom you have a wanton and a despotic power; but as a subject, which you are bound to govern, with a temperate and restrained authority.

Bel. True, sir, most truly said; mine's a commission, not a right; I am the offspring of distress, and every child of sorrow is my brother; while I have hands to hold, therefore, I will hold them open to mankind; but, sir, my passions are my masters; they take me where they will; and oftentimes they leave to reason and to virtue nothing but my wishes and my sighs.

Stock. Come, come, the man who can accuse, corrects himself.

Bel. Ah! that's an office I am weary of; I wish a friend would take it up; I would to heaven you had leisure for the employ; but, did you drive a trade to the four corners of the world, you would not find the task so toilsome as to keep me free from faults.

Stock. Well, I am not discouraged; this candour tells me I should not have the fault of self conceit to combat; that, at least, is not amongst the number.

Bel. No; if I knew that man on earth who thought more humbly of me than I do of myself, I would take up his opinion, and forego my own.

Stock. And were I to choose a pupil, it should be one of your complexion; so if you'll come along with me, we'll agree upon your admission, and enter on a course of lectures directly.

Bel. With all my heart.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. A Room in LADY RUSPORT'S House.

Enter LADY RUSPORT and MISS RUSPORT.

Lady R. Miss Rusport, I desire to hear no more of captain Dudley and his destitute family; not a shilling of mine shall ever cross the hands of any of them; because my sister chose to marry a beggar, am I bound to support him and his posterity?

Miss R. I think you are.

Lady R. You think I am! and pray where do you find the law that tells you so?

Miss R. I am not proficient enough to quote chapter and verse; but I take charity to be a main clause in the great statute of Christianity.

Lady R. I say charity, indeed! I am apt to think the distresses of old Dudley, and of his daughter into the bargain, would never break your heart, if there was not a certain young fellow of two-and-twenty in the case; who, by the happy recommendation of a good person, and the brilliant appointments of an ensigncy, will, if I am not mistaken, cozen you out of a fortune of twice twenty thousand pounds, as soon as ever you are of age to bestow it upon him.

Miss R. A nephew of your ladyship's can never want any other recommendation with me: and if my partiality for Charles Dudley is acquitted by the rest of the world, I hope lady Rusport will not condemn me for it.

Lady R. I condemn you! I thank heaven, miss Rusport, I am no ways reponsible for your conduct; nor is it any concern of mine how you dispose of yourself: you are not my daughter, and, when I married your father, poor sir Stephen Rusport, I found you a forward spoiled miss of fourteen, far above being instructed by me.

Miss R. Perhaps your ladyship calls this instruction.

Lady R. You are strangely pert; but 'tis no wonder: your mother, I'm told, was a fine lady: and according to the modern style of education you was brought up. It was not so in my young days; there was then some decorum in the world, some subordination, as the great Locke expresses it. Oh! 'twas an edifying sight, to see the regular deportment observed in our family; no giggling, no gossiping was going on there; my good father, sir Oliver Roundhead, never was seen to laugh himself, nor ever allowed it in his children.

Miss R. Ay; those were happy times, indeed.

Lady R. But, in this forward age, we have coquettes in the egg-shell, and philosophers in the cradle; girls of fifteen, that lead the fashion in new caps and new opinions, that have their sentiments and their sensations; and the idle fops encourage them in it: O my conscience, I wonder what it is the men can see in such babies.

Miss R. True, madam; but all men do not overlook the maturer beauties of your ladyship's age; witness your admired major Dennis O'Flaherty; there's an example of some discernment; I declare to you, when your ladyship is by, the major takes no more notice of me than if I was part of the furniture of your chamber.

Lady R. The major, child, has travelled through various kingdoms and climates, and has more enlarged

notions of female merit than falls to the lot of an English home-bred lover; in most other countries, no woman on your side forty would ever be named in a polite circle.

Miss R. Right, madam; I've been told that in Vienna they have coquettes upon crutches, and Venuses in their grand climacteric; a lover there celebrates the wrinkles, not the dimples in his mistress' face. The major, I think, has served in the imperial army.

Lady R. Are you piqued, my young madam? Had my sister Louisa, yielded to the addresses of one of major O'Flaherty's person and appearance, she would have had some excuse; but to run away as she did, at the age of sixteen, too, with a man of old Dudley's sort——

Miss R. Was, in my opinion, the most venial trespass that ever girl of sixteen committed; of a noble family, an engaging person, strict honour, and sound understanding, what accomplishment was there wanting in captain Dudley, but that which the prodigality of his ancestors had deprived him of?

Lady R. They left him as much as he deserves; hasn't the old man captain's half-pay? And is not the son an ensign?

Miss R. An ensign! Alas, poor Charles! Would to heaven he knew what my heart feels and suffers for his sake.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Ensign Dudley, to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady R. Who! Dudley! What can have brought him to town?

Miss R. Dear madam, 'tis Charles Dudley, 'tis your nephew.

Lady R. Nephew! I renounce him as my nephew; sir Oliver renounced him as his grandson; wasn't he son of the eldest daughter, and only male descendant of sir Oliver; and didn't he cut him off with a shilling? Didn't the poor dear good old man leave his fortune to me, except a small annuity to my maiden sister, who spoiled her constitution with nursing him? And, depend

upon it, not a penny of that fortune shall ever be disposed of otherwise than according to the will of the donor.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

So, young man, whence came you? What brings you to town?

Charles. If there is any offence in my coming to town, your ladyship is in some degree responsible for it, for part of my errand was to pay my duty here.

Lady R. And where is your father, child; and your sister? Are they in town too?

Charles. They are.

Lady R. Ridiculous! I don't know what people do in London, who have no money to spend in it.

Miss R. Dear madam, speak more kindly to your nephew; how can you oppress a youth of his sensibility?

Lady R. Miss Rusport, I insist upon your retiring to your apartment; when I want your advice, I'll send to you. [*Exit Miss Rusport*] So you have put on a red coat too, as well as your father; 'tis plain what value you set upon the good advice sir Oliver used to give you: how often has he cautioned you against the army?

Charles. Had it pleased my grandfather to enable me to have obeyed his caution, I would have done it; but you well know how destitute I am; and 'tis not to be wondered at if I prefer the service of my king to that of any other master.

Lady R. Well, well, take your own course; 'tis no concern of mine: you never consulted me.

Charles. I frequently wrote to your ladyship, but could obtain no answer; and, since my grandfather's death, this is the first opportunity I have had of waiting upon you.

Lady R. I must desire you not to mention the death of that dear good man in my hearing; my spirits cannot support it.

Charles. I shall obey you: permit me to say, that, as that event has richly supplied you with the materials of bounty, the distresses of my family can furnish you with objects of it.

Lady R. The distresses of your family, child, are quite out of the question at present. Tell your father and your sister, I totally disapprove of their coming up to town.

Charles. Must I tell my father that, before your ladyship knows the motive that brought him hither? Allured by the offer of exchanging for a commission on full pay, the veteran, after thirty years service, prepares to encounter the fatal heats of Senegambia; but wants a small supply to equip him for the expedition.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Major O'Flaherty, to wait on your ladyship.

Enter MAJOR.

O'Fla. Spare your speeches, young man; don't you think her ladyship can take my word for that? I hope, madam, 'tis evidence enough of my being present, when I have the honour of telling you so myself.

Lady R. Major O'Flaherty, I am rejoiced to see you. Nephew Dudley, you perceive I'm engaged.

Charles. I shall not intrude upon your ladyship's more agreeable engagements. I presume I have my answer?

Lady R. Your answer, child! What answer can you possibly expect? or how can your romantic father suppose that I am to abet him in all his idle and extravagant undertakings? Come, major, let me show you the way into my dressing-room; and let us leave this young adventurer to his meditation. *[Exit.*

O'Fla. I follow you, my lady. Young gentleman, your obedient! Upon my conscience, as fine a young fellow as I would wish to clap my eyes on: he might have answered my salute, however—well, let it pass; Fortune, perhaps, frowns upon the poor lad; she's a damn'd slippery lady, and very apt to jilt us poor fellows that wear cockades in our hats. Fare thee well, honey, whoever thou art. *[Exit.*

Charles. So much for the virtues of a puritan—out upon it; her heart is flint; yet that woman, that aunt

of mine, without one worthy particle in her composition, would, I dare be sworn, as soon set her foot in a pesthouse, as in a playhouse.

Enter Miss RUSPORT.

Miss R. Stop, stay a little, Charles; whither are you going in such haste?

Charles. Madam; miss Rusport; what are your commands?

Miss R. Why so reserved? We had used to answer to no other names than those of Charles and Charlotte.

Charles. What ails you? You have been weeping.

Miss R. No, no; or if I have, your eyes are full too; but I have a thousand things to say to you: before you go, tell me, I conjure you, where you are to be found: here, give me your direction; write it upon the back of this visiting ticket—Have you a pencil?

Charles. I have: but why should you desire to find us out? 'tis a poor little inconvenient place; my sister has no apartment fit to receive you in.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, my lady desires your company directly.

Miss R. I am coming—well, have you wrote it? Give it me. O, Charles! either you do not or you will not understand me.

[Exeunt severally.]

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. *A Room in FULMER'S House.*

FULMER discovered seated; MRS. FULMER enters to him.

Mrs. Ful. Why, how you sit, musing and moping, sighing and desponding! I'm asham'd of you, Mr. Fulmer: is this the country you described to me, a second Eldorado, rivers of gold and rocks of diamonds? You found me in a pretty snug retired way of life at Bologne, out of the noise and bustle of the world, and wholly at my ease: but, thank heaven, our partnership is revocable; I am not your wedded wife, praised be my stars! for what have we got, whom have we gulled but ourselves? which of all your trains has taken fire? even this poor expedient of your bookseller's shop seems abandoned; for if a chance customer drops in, who is there, pray, to help him to what he wants?

Ful. Patty, you know it is not upon slight grounds that I despair; there had used to be a livelihood to be picked up in this country, both for the honest and dishonest: I have tried each walk, and am likely to starve

at last: there is not a point to which the wit and faculty of man can turn, that I have not set mine to, but in vain; I am beat through every quarter of the compass.

Mrs. Ful. Ah! common efforts all: strike me a master-stroke, Mr. Fulmer, if you wish to make any figure in this country.

Ful. But where, how, and what? I have blustered for prerogative; I have bellow'd for freedom; I have offered to serve my country; I have engaged to betray it; a master-stroke, truly! why, I have talked treason, writ treason, and, if a man can't live by that, he can live by nothing. Here I set up as a bookseller, why, men leave off reading; and if I was to turn butcher, I believe, o'my conscience, they'd leave off eating.

CAPTAIN DUDLEY crosses the Stage.

Mrs. Ful. Why, there now's your lodger, old captain Dudley, as he calls himself; there's no flint without fire; something might be struck out of him, if you had the wit to find the way.

Ful. Hang him, an old dry-skinned curmudgeon; you may as well think to get truth out of a courtier, or candour out of a critic: I can make nothing of him; besides, he's poor, and therefore not for our purpose.

Mrs. Ful. The more fool he! Would any man be poor, that had such a prodigy in his possession?

Ful. His daughter, you mean; she is, indeed, uncommonly beautiful.

Mrs. Ful. Beautiful! Why, she need only be seen, to have the first men in the kingdom at her feet. What would some of our young nabobs give——?

Ful. Hush! here comes the captain; good girl, leave us to ourselves, and let me try what I can make of him.

Mrs. Ful. Captain, truly! i'faith I'd have a regiment, had I such a daughter, before I was three months older.

[*Exit.*]

Enter CAPTAIN DUDLEY.

Ful. Captain Dudley, good morning to you.

Dud. Mr. Fulmer, I have borrowed a book from your

shop; 'tis the sixth volume of my deceased friend Tristram: he is a flattering writer to us poor soldiers; and the divine story of *Le Fevre*, which makes part of this book, in my opinion of it, does honour, not to its author only, but to human nature.

Ful. He's an author I keep in the way of trade, but one I never relished: he is much too loose and profligate for my taste.

Dud. That's being too severe: I hold him to be a moralist in the noblest sense; he plays, indeed, with the fancy, and sometimes, perhaps, too wantonly; but while he thus designedly masks his main attack, he comes at once upon the heart; refines, amends it, softens it; beats down each selfish barrier from about it, and opens every sluice of pity and benevolence.

Ful. Well, sir, I shall not oppose your opinion; a favourite author is like a favourite mistress; and there, you know, captain, no man likes to have his taste arraigned.

Dud. Upon my word, sir, I don't know what a man likes in that case; 'tis an experiment I never made.

Ful. Sir!—Are you serious.

Dud. 'Tis of little consequence whether you think so.

Ful. What a formal old prig it is! [*Aside*] I apprehend you, sir; you speak with caution; you are married?

Dud. I have been.

Ful. And this young lady, which accompanies you—

Dud. Passes for my daughter.

Ful. Passes for his daughter! humph—[*Aside*] She is exceedingly beautiful, finely accomplished, of a most enchanting shape and air.

Dud. You are much too partial; she has the greatest defect a woman can have.

Ful. How so, pray?

Dud. She has no fortune.

Ful. Rather say, that you have none; and that's a sore defect in one of your years, captain Dudley: you have served, no doubt?

Dud. Familiar coxcomb! But I'll humour him.

Ful. A close old fox! but I'll unkennel him. [*Aside.*]

Dud. Above thirty years I have been in the service, Mr. Fulmer.

Ful. I guessed as much; I laid it at no less: why, 'tis a wearisome time; 'tis an apprenticeship to a profession, fit only for a patriarch. But preferment must be closely followed: you never could have been so far behindhand in the chase, unless you had palpably mistaken your way. You'll pardon me; but I begin to perceive you have lived in the world, not with it.

Dud. It may be so; and you, perhaps, can give me better counsel. I am now soliciting a favour; an exchange to a company on full pay; nothing more; and yet I meet a thousand bars to that; though, without boasting, I should think the certificate of services which I sent in might have purchased that indulgence to me.

Ful. Who thinks or cares about them? Certificate of services, indeed! Send in a certificate of your fair daughter; carry her in your hand with you.

Dud. What! Who! My daughter! Carry my daughter! Well, and what then?

Ful. Why, then your fortune's made, that's all.

Dud. I understand you: and this you call knowledge of the world! Despicable knowledge; but, sirrah, I will have you know—

[Threatens him.]

Ful. Help! Who's within? Would you strike me, sir? would you lift up your hand against a man in his own house?

Dud. In a church, if he dare insult the poverty of a man of honour.

Ful. Have a care what you do; remember there is such a thing in law as an assault and battery; ay, and such trifling forms as warrants and indictments.

Dud. Go, sir; you are too mean for my resentment: 'tis that, and not the law, protects you. Hence!

Ful. An old, absurd, incorrigible blockhead! I'll be revenged of him.

[Aside.]

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Charles. What is the matter, sir? Sure I heard an outcry as I entered the house.

Dud. Not unlikely; our landlord and his wife are for ever wrangling.—Did you find your aunt Dudley at home?

Charles. I did.

Dud. And what was your reception.

Charles. Cold as our poverty and her pride could make it.

Dud. You told her the pressing occasion I had for a small supply to equip me for this exchange; has she granted me the relief I asked?

Charles. Alas, sir, she has peremptorily refused it.

Dud. That's hard; that's hard, indeed! My petition was for a small sum; she has refused it, you say: well, be it so; I must not complain. Did you see the broker, about the insurance on my life?

Charles. There again I am the messenger of ill news; I can raise no money, so fatal is the climate: alas! that ever my father should be sent to perish in such a place!

LOUISA DUDLEY enters hastily.

Dud. Louisa, what's the matter? you seem frightened.

Lou. I am, indeed: coming from miss Rusport's, I met a young gentleman in the streets, who has beset me in the strangest manner.

Charles. Insufferable! Was he rude to you?

Lou. I cannot say he was absolutely rude to me, but he was very importunate to speak to me, and once or twice attempted to lift up my hat; he followed me to the corner of the street, and there I gave him the slip.

Dud. You must walk no more in the streets, child, without me, or your brother.

Lou. O Charles! miss Rusport desires to see you directly; lady Rusport is gone out, and she has something particular to say to you.

Charles. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Dud. None, my dear; by all means wait upon miss Rusport. Come, Louisa; I must desire you to go up to your chamber, and compose yourself. *[Exit.]*

Enter BELCOUR, after peeping in at the Door.

Bel. Not a soul, as I'm alive. Why, what an odd

sort of a house is this! Confound the little jilt, she has fairly given me the slip. A plague upon this London, I shall have no luck in it: such a crowd, and such a hurry, and such a number of shops, and one so like the other, that whether the wench turned into this house or the next, or whether she went up stairs or down stairs (for there's a world above and a world below, it seems), I declare I know no more than if I was in the Blue Mountains. In the name of all the devils at once, why did she run away? If every handsome girl I meet in this town is to lead me such a wildgoose chase, I had better have stay'd in the torrid zone: I shall be wasted to the size of a sugar-cane: what shall I do? give the chase up? hang it, that's cowardly: shall I, a true-born son of Phœbus, suffer this little nimble-footed Daphne to escape me?—'Forbid it, honour, and forbid it, love.' Hush! hush! here she comes! Oh! the devil! What tawdry thing have we got here?

Enter MRS. FULMER.

Mrs. Ful. Your humble servant, sir.

Bel. Your humble servant, madam.

Mrs. Ful. A fine summer's day, sir.

Bel. Yes, ma'am; and so cool, that, if the calendar didn't call it July, I should swear it was January.

Mrs. Ful. Sir!

Bel. Madam!

Mrs. Ful. Do you wish to speak to Mr. Fulmer, sir?

Bel. Mr. Fulmer, madam? I hav'n't the honour of knowing such a person.

Mrs. Ful. No! I'll be sworn, have you not; thou art much too pretty a fellow, and too much of a gentleman, to be an author thyself, or to have any thing to say to those that are so. 'Tis the captain, I suppose, you are waiting for.

Bel. I rather suspect it is the captain's wife.

Mrs. Ful. The captain has no wife, sir.

Bel. No wife! I'm heartily sorry for it; for then she's his mistress; and that I take to be the more desperate case of the two. Pray, madam, wasn't there

a lady just now turned into your house? 'Twas with her I wished to speak.

Mrs. Ful. What sort of a lady, pray?

Bel. One of the loveliest sort my eyes ever beheld; young, tall, fresh, fair; in short, a goddess.

Mrs. Ful. Nay, but dear, dear sir, now I'm sure you flatter; for 'twas me you followed into the shop door this minute.

Bel. You! No, no, take my word for it, it was not you, madam.

Mrs. Ful. But what is it you laugh at?

Bel. Upon my soul, I ask your pardon; but it was not you, believe me; be assured it wasn't.

Mrs. Ful. Well, sir, I shall not contend for the honour of being noticed by you; I hope you think you wouldn't have been the first man that noticed me in the streets; however, this I'm positive of, that no living woman but myself has entered these doors this morning.

Bel. Why, then, I'm mistaken in the house, that's all; for it is not humanly possible I can be so far out in the lady. *[Going.]*

Mrs. Ful. Coxcomb!—But hold—a thought occurs; as sure as can be, he has seen miss Dudley. A word with you, young gentleman; come back.

Bel. Well, what's your pleasure?

Mrs. Ful. You seem greatly captivated with this young lady; are you apt to fall in love thus at first sight?

Bel. Oh, yes: 'tis the only way I can ever fall in love; any man may tumble into a pit by surprise; none but a fool would walk into one by choice.

Mrs. Ful. You are a hasty lover, it seems; have you spirit to be a generous one? They, that will please the eye, mustn't spare the purse.

Bel. Try me; put me to the proof; bring me to an interview with the dear girl that has thus captivated me, and see whether I have spirit to be grateful.

Mrs. Ful. But how, pray, am I to know the girl you have set your heart on?

Bel. By an undescribable grace, that accompanies every look and action that falls from her; there can be but one such woman in the world, and nobody can mistake that one.

Mrs. Ful. Well, if I should stumble upon this angel in my walks, where am I to find you? What's your name?

Bel. Upon my soul I can't tell you my name.

Mrs. Ful. Not tell me! Why so?

Bel. Because I don't know what it is myself; as yet I have no name.

Mrs. Ful. No name!

Bel. None; a friend, indeed, lent me his; but he forbade me to use it on any unworthy occasion.

Mrs. Ful. But where is your place of abode?

Bel. I have none; I never slept a night in England in my life.

Mrs. Ful. Hey day!

Enter FULMER.

Ful. A fine case, truly, in a free country; a pretty pass things are come to, if a man is to be assaulted in his own house.

Mrs. Ful. Who has assaulted you, my dear?

Ful. Who! why this captain Drawcansir, this old Dudley, my lodger; but I'll unlodge him; I'll unharbour him, I warrant.

Mrs. Ful. Hush! hush! Hold your tongue, man; pocket the affront, and be quiet; I've a scheme on foot will pay you a hundred beatings. Why you surprise me, Mr. Fulmer; captain Dudley assault you! Impossible.

Ful. Nay, I can't call it an absolute assault; but he threatened me.

Mrs. Ful. Oh, was that all? I thought how it would turn out—A likely thing, truly, for a person of his obliging, compassionate turn: no, no, poor captain Dudley, he has sorrows and distresses enough of his own to employ his spirits, without setting them against other people. Make it up as fast as you can: watch

this gentleman out; follow him wherever he goes, and bring me word who and what he is; be sure you don't lose sight of him; I've other business in hand. [Exit.

Bel. Pray, sir, what sorrows and distresses have befallen this old gentleman you speak of?

Ful. Poverty, disappointment, and all the distresses attendant thereupon: sorrow enough of all conscience: I soon found how it was with him, by his way of living, low enough of all reason; but what I overheard this morning put it out of all doubt.

Bel. What did you overhear this morning?

Ful. Why, it seems he wants to join his regiment, and has been beating the town over to raise a little money for that purpose upon his pay; but the climate, I find, where he is going is so unhealthy, that nobody can be found to lend him any.

Bel. Why, then your town is a damned good-for-nothing town: and I wish I had never come into it.

Ful. That's what I say, sir; the hard-heartedness of some folks is unaccountable. There's an old lady Rusport, a near relation of this gentleman's; she lives hard by here, opposite to Stockwell's, the great merchant; he sent to her a-begging, but to no purpose; though she is as rich as a Jew, she would not furnish him with a farthing.

Bel. Is the captain at home?

Ful. He is up stairs, sir.

Bel. Will you take the trouble to desire him to step hither! I want to speak to him.

Ful. I'll send him to you directly. I don't know what to make of this young man; but, if I live, I will find him out, or know the reason why. [Exit.

Bel. I've lost the girl, it seems, that's clear: she was the first object of my pursuit; but the case of this poor officer touches me; and, after all, there may be as much true delight in rescuing a fellow creature from distress, as there would be in plunging one into it—But let me see: it's a point that must be managed with some delicacy—Apropos! there's pen and ink—I've struck upon a method that will do. [Writes] Ay, ay, this is the very thing: 'twas devilish lucky I happened to have

these bills about me. There, there, fare you well! I'm glad to be rid of you; you stood a chance of being worse applied, I can tell you.

[Encloses and seals the Paper.]

FULMER brings in DUDLEY.

Ful. That's the gentleman, sir. I shall make bold, however, to lend an ear. *[Exit.]*

Dud. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Bel. Your name is Dudley, sir? —

Dud. It is.

Bel. You command a company, I think, captain Dudley?

Dud. I did: I am now upon half-pay.

Bel. You have served some time?

Dud. A pretty many years; long enough to see some people of more merit, and better interest than myself, made general officers.

Bel. Their merit I may have some doubt of; their interest I can readily give credit to; there is little promotion to be looked for in your profession, I believe, without friends, captain?

Dud. I believe so too: have you any other business with me, may I ask?

Bel. Your patience for a moment. I was informed you was about to join your regiment in distant quarters abroad.

Dud. I have been soliciting an exchange to a company on full pay, quartered at James' Fort, in Senegambia; but, I'm afraid, I must drop the undertaking.

Bel. Why so, pray?

Dud. Why so, sir? 'Tis a home question, for a perfect stranger to put; there is something very particular in all this.

Bel. If it is not impertinent, sir, allow me to ask you what reason you have for despairing of success.

Dud. Why, really, sir, mine is an obvious reason, for a soldier to have—Want of money; simply that.

Bel. May I beg to know the sum you have occasion for?

Dud. Truly, sir, I cannot exactly tell you on a

sudden; nor is it, I suppose, of any great consequence to you to be informed: but I should guess, in the gross, that two hundred pounds would serve.

Bel. And do you find a difficulty in raising that sum upon your pay? 'Tis done every day.

Dud. The nature of the climate makes it difficult: I can get no one to insure my life.

Bel. Oh! that's a circumstance may make for you, as well as against: in short, captain Dudley, it so happens, that I can command the sum of two hundred pounds: seek no further; I'll accommodate you with it upon easy terms.

Dud. Sir! do I understand you rightly?—I beg your pardon; but am I to believe that you are in earnest?

Bel. What is your surprise? Is it an uncommon thing for a gentleman to speak truth? Or is it incredible that one fellow-creature should assist another?

Dud. I ask your pardon—May I beg to know to whom?—Do you propose this in the way of business?

Bel. Entirely: I have no other business on earth.

Dud. Indeed! you are not a broker, I'm persuaded.

Bel. I am not.

Dud. Nor an army agent, I think?

Bel. I hope you will not think the worse of me for being neither; in short, sir, if you will peruse this paper, it will explain to you who I am, and upon what terms I act; while you read it, I will step home, and fetch the money: and we will conclude the bargain without loss of time. In the mean while, good day to you. [Exit hastily.]

Dud. Humph! there's something very odd in all this—let me see what we've got here—This paper is to tell me who he is, and what are his terms: in the name of wonder, why has he sealed it? Hey-day! what's here? Two Bank notes, of a hundred each! I can't comprehend what this means. Hold; here's a writing; perhaps that will show me. *Accept this trifle; pursue your fortune, and prosper. Am I in a dream? Is this a reality?*

Enter MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. 'Save you, my dear! Is it you now that are

captain Dudley, I would ask? [*Exit Dudley*].—Whuh! What's the hurry the man's in? If 'tis the lad that run out of the shop you would overtake, you might as well stay where you are; by my soul he's as nimble as a Croat; you are a full hour's march in his rear—Ay faith, you may as well turn back, and give over the pursuit.

Re-enter DUDLEY.

Well, captain Dudley, if that's your name, there's a letter for you. Read, man; read it; and I'll have a word with you after you have done.

Dud. More miracles on foot! So, so, from lady Rusport.

O'Fla. You're right; it's from her ladyship.

Dud. Well, sir, I have cast my eye over it; 'tis short and peremptory; are you acquainted with the contents?

O'Fla. Not at all, my dear; not at all.

Dud. Have you any message from lady Rusport?

O'Fla. Not a syllable, honey: only when you've digested the letter, I've a little bit of a message to deliver you from myself.

Dud. And may I beg to know who yourself is?

O'Fla. Dennis O'Flaherty, at your service; a poor major of grenadiers; nothing better.

Dud. So much for your name and title, sir; now be so good to favour me with your message.

O'Fla. Why then, captain, I must tell you I have promised lady Rusport you shall do whatever it is she bids you to do in that letter there.

Dud. Ay, indeed; have you undertaken so much, major, without knowing either what she commands, or what I can perform?

O'Fla. That's your concern, my dear, not mine; I must keep my word, you know.

Dud. Or else, I suppose, you and I must measure swords.

O'Fla. Upon my soul you've hit it.

Dud. That would hardly answer to either of us; you and I have, probably, had enough of fighting in our time before now.

O'Fla. Faith and troth, master Dudley, you may say

that; 'tis thirty years, come the time, that I have followed the trade, and in a pretty many countries.—Let me see—In the war before last I served in the Irish brigade, d'ye see; there, after bringing off the French monarch, I left his service, with a British bullet in my body, and this riband in my buttonhole. Last war I followed the fortunes of the German eagle, in the corps of grenadiers; there I had my bellyful of fighting, and a plentiful scarcity of every thing else. After six-and-twenty engagements, great and small, I went off with this gash on my skull, and a kiss of the empress queen's sweet hand, (heaven bless it!) for my pains. Since the peace, my dear, I took a little turn with the confederates there in Poland—but such another set of madcaps!—by the lord Harry, I never knew what it was they were scuffling about.

Dud. Well, major, I won't add another action to the list; you shall keep your promise with lady Rusport: she requires me to leave London; I shall go in a few days, and you may take what credit you please from my compliance.

O'Fla. Give me your hand, my dear boy! this will make her my own; when that's the case, we shall be brothers, you know, and we'll share her fortune between us.

Dud. Not so, major; the man, who marries lady Rusport, will have a fair title to her fortune without division. But, I hope, your expectations of prevailing are founded upon good reasons.

O'Fla. Upon the best grounds in the world; first, I think she will comply, because she is a woman; secondly, I am persuaded she won't hold out long, because she's a widow; and thirdly, I make sure of her, because I have married five wives (*en militaire*, captain), and never failed yet; and, for what I know, they are all alive and merry at this very hour.

Dud. Well, sir, go on, and prosper; if you can inspire lady Rusport with half your charity, I shall think you deserve all her fortune; at present, I must beg your excuse: good morning to you. [*Exit.*]

O'Fla. A good sensible man, and very much of a

soldier; I did not care if I was better acquainted with him: but 'tis an awkward kind of country for that; the English, I observe, are close friends, but distant acquaintance. I suspect the old lady has not been over generous to poor Dudley; I shall give her a little touch about that: upon my soul, I know but one excuse a person can have for giving nothing, and that is, like myself, having nothing to give. [Exit.]

SCENE II. LADY RUSPORT'S House. A Dressing-room.

MISS RUSPORT and LUCY.

Miss R. Well, Lucy, you've dislodged the old lady at last; but methought you was a tedious time about it.

Lucy. A tedious time, indeed; I think they who have least to spare, contrive to throw the most away; I thought I should never have got her out of the house: then, madam, this being a visit of great ceremony to a person of distinction at the west end of the town, the old state chariot was dragg'd forth on the occasion, with strict charges to dress out the box with the leopard skin hammercloth.

Miss R. Yes, and to hang the false tails on the miserable stumps of the old crawling cattle: well, well, pray, heaven, the old crazy affair don't break down again with her.—But where's Charles Dudley? Run down, dear girl, and be ready to let him in; I think he's as long in coming as she was in going.

Lucy. Why, indeed, madam, you seem the more alert of the two, I must say. [Exit.]

Miss R. Now the deuce take the girl, for putting that notion into my head: I am sadly afraid Dudley does not like me; so much encouragement as I have given him to declare himself, I never could get a word from him on the subject! This may be very honourable, but upon my life it's very provoking. By the way, I wonder how I look to-day: Oh! shockingly! hideously pale! like a witch!—This is the old lady's glass, and she has left some of her wrinkles on it.—How frightfully have I put on my cap! all awry! and my hair dressed so unbecoming! altogether, I'm a most complete fright—

Enter CHARLES, unobserved.

Charles. That I deny.

Miss R. Ah!

Charles. Quarrelling with your glass, cousin? Make it up, make it up, and be friends; it cannot compliment you more than by reflecting you as you are.

Miss R. Well, I vow, my dear Charles, that is delightfully said, and deserves my very best courtesy; your flattery, like a rich jewel, has a value not only from its superior lustre, but from its extraordinary scarceness: I verily think, this is the only civil speech you ever directed to my person in your life.

Charles. And I ought to ask pardon of your good sense, for having done it now.

Miss R. Nay, now you relapse again: don't you know, if you keep well with a woman on the great score of beauty, she'll never quarrel with you on the trifling article of good sense?—But any thing serves to fill up a dull, yawning hour, with an insipid cousin; you have brighter moments, and warmer spirits, for the dear girl of your heart.

Charles. Oh, fie upon you! fie upon you!

Miss R. You blush, and the reason is apparent:—you are a novice at hypocrisy; but no practice can make a visit of ceremony pass for a visit of choice: love is ever before its time; friendship is apt to lag a little after it.—Pray, Charles, did you make any extraordinary haste hither?

Charles. By your question, I see, you acquit me of the impertinence of being in love.

Miss R. But why impertinence? Why the impertinence of being in love?—You have one language for me, Charles, and another for the woman of your affection.

Charles. You are mistaken—the woman of my affection shall never hear any other language from me, than what I use to you.

Miss R. I am afraid, then, you'll never make yourself understood by her.

Charles. It is not fit I should; there is no need of

love to make me miserable; 'tis wretchedness enough to be a beggar.

Miss R. A beggar do you call yourself! O Charles, Charles, rich in every merit and accomplishment, whom may you not aspire to? And why think you so unworthily of our sex, as to conclude there is not one to be found with sense to discern your virtue, and generosity to reward it?

Charles. You distress me;—I must beg to hear no more.

Miss R. Well, I can be silent.—Thus does he always serve me, whenever I am about to disclose myself to him. [*Aside.*

Charles. Why do you not banish me and my misfortunes for ever from your thoughts?

Miss R. Ay, wherefore do I not, since you never allowed me a place in yours?—But go, sir; I have no right to stay you; go where your heart directs you; go to the happy, the distinguished, fair one.

Charles. Now, by all that's good, you do me wrong; there is no such fair one for me to go to; nor have I an acquaintance among the sex, yourself excepted, which answers to that description.

Miss R. Indeed!

Charles. In very truth—there, then, let us drop the subject.—May you be happy, though I never can!

Miss R. O Charles! give me your hand; if I have offended you, I ask your pardon: you have been long acquainted with my temper, and know how to bear with its infirmities.

Charles. Thus, my dear Charlotte, let us seal our reconciliation!—[*Kissing her Hand*] Bear with thy infirmities! By heaven, I know not any one failing in thy whole composition, except, that of too great a partiality for an undeserving man.

Miss R. And you are now taking the very course to augment that failing.—A thought strikes me;—I have a commission that you must absolutely execute for me;—I have immediate occasion for the sum of two hundred pounds; you know my fortune is shut up till I am of age; take this paltry box (it contains my ear-

rings, and some other baubles I have no use for), carry it to our opposite neighbour, Mr. Stockwell (I don't know where else to apply), leave it as a deposit in his hands, and beg him to accommodate me with the sum.

Charles. Dear Charlotte, what are you about to do? How can you possibly want two hundred pounds?

Miss R. How can I possibly do without it, you mean? Doesn't every lady want two hundred pounds?—Perhaps, I have lost it at play—perhaps, I mean to win as much to it—perhaps, I want it for two hundred different uses.

Charles. Pooh! pooh! all this is nothing; don't I know you never play?

Miss R. You mistake; I have a spirit to set, not only this trifle, but my whole fortune upon a stake; therefore make no wry faces, but do as I bid you. You will find Mr. Stockwell a very honourable gentleman.

Enter Lucy, in haste.

Lucy. Dear madam, as I live, here comes the old lady in a hackney coach.

Miss R. The old chariot has given her a second tumble:—away with you! you know your way out, without meeting her. Take the box, and do as I desire you.

Charles. I must not dispute your orders. Farewell!
[*Exeunt Charles and Miss Rusport.*]

Enter LADY RUSPORT, leaning on MAJOR O'FLAHERTY'S Arm.

O'Fla. Rest yourself upon my arm: never spare it: 'tis strong enough; it has stood harder service than you can put it to.

Lucy. Meroy upon me, what is the matter? I am frightened out of my wits—Has your ladyship had an accident?

Lady R. O Lucy, the most untoward one in nature. I know not how I shall repair it.

O'Fla. Never go about to repair it, my lady; even build a new one; 'twas but a crazy piece of business at best.

Lucy. Bless me, is the old chariot broke down with you again?

Lady R. Broke, child! I don't know what might have been broke, if by great good fortune, this obliging gentleman had not been at hand to assist me.

Lucy. Dear madam, let me run and fetch you a cup of the cordial drops.

Lady R. Do, *Lucy*. [*Exit Lucy*] Alas, sir! ever since I lost my husband, my poor nerves have been shook to pieces:—there hangs his beloved picture; that precious relic, and a plentiful jointure, is all that remains to console me for the best of men.

O'Fla. Let me see—i'faith a comely personage; by his fur cloak, I suppose, he was in the Russian service; and by the gold chain round his neck, I should guess, he had been honoured with the order of St. Catharine.

Lady R. No, no; he meddled with no St. Catharines—that's the habit he wore in his mayoralty; sir Stephen was lord mayor of London—but he is gone, and has left me, a poor, weak, solitary widow, behind him.

O'Fla. By all means, then, take a strong, able, hearty man, to repair his loss:—if such a plain fellow as one Dennis O'Flaherty can please you, I think I may venture to say, without any disparagement to the gentleman in the fur gown there—

Lady R. What are you going to say? Don't shock my ears with any comparisons, I desire.

O'Fla. Not I, my soul; I don't believe there's any comparison in the case.

Re-enter LUCY, with a Bottle and Glass.

Lady R. Oh, are you come? Give me the drops—I'm all in a flutter.

O'Fla. Harkye, sweetheart, what are those same drops? Have you any more left in the bottle? I didn't care if I took a little sip of them myself.

Lucy. Oh, sir, they are called the cordial restorative elixir, or the nervous golden drops; they are only for ladies' cases.

O'Fla. Yes, yes, my dear, there are gentlemen as

well as ladies, that stand in need of those same golden drops; they'd suit my case to a tittle.

Lady R. Well, major, did you give old Dudley my letter, and will the silly man do as I bid him, and be gone.

O'Fla. You are obeyed—he's on his march.

Lady R. That's well; you have managed this matter to perfection; I didn't think he would have been so easily prevailed upon.

O'Fla. At the first word: no difficulty in life; 'twas the very thing he was determined to do, before I came; I never met a more obliging gentleman.

Lady R. Well, 'tis no matter; so I am but rid of him, and his distresses: would you believe it, major O'Flaherty, it was but this morning he sent a-begging to me for money to fit him out upon some wildgoose expedition to the coast of Africa, I know not where.

O'Fla. Well, you sent him what he wanted?

Lady R. I sent him what he deserved, a flat refusal.

O'Fla. You refused him?

Lady R. Most undoubtedly.

O'Fla. You sent him nothing?

Lady R. Not a shilling.

O'Fla. Good morning to you—Your servant—

[*Going.*

Lady R. Hey day! what ails the man? Where are you going?

O'Fla. Out of your house, before the roof falls on my head—to poor Dudley, to share the little modicum, that thirty years hard service has left me; I wish it was more, for his sake.

Lady R. Very well, sir; take your course; I sha'n't attempt to stop you; I shall survive it; it will not break my heart, if I never see you more.

O'Fla. Break your heart! No, o'my conscience will it not.—You preach, and you pray, and you turn up your eyes, and all the while you are as hard-hearted as a hyena—A hyena, truly! by my soul, there isn't in the whole creation so savage an animal as a human creature without pity!

Lady R. A hyena, truly!

[*Exit.*
[*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *A Room in STOCKWELL'S House.*

STOCKWELL and BELCOUR.

Stock. Gratify me so far, however, Mr. Belcour, as to see miss Rusport; carry her the sum she wants, and return the poor girl her box of diamonds, which Dudley left in my hands: you know what to say on the occasion better than I do; that part of your commission I leave to your own discretion, and you may season it with what gallantry you think fit.

Bel. You could not have pitched upon a greater bungler at gallantry than myself, if you had rummaged every company in the city, and the whole court of aldermen into the bargain:—part of your errand, however, I will do; but whether it shall be with an ill grace or a good one, depends upon the caprice of a moment, the humour of the lady, the mode of our meeting, and a thousand undefinable small circumstances, that, nevertheless, determine us upon all the great occasions of life.

Stock. I persuade myself you will find miss Rusport an ingenious, worthy, animated girl.

Bel. Why, I like her the better, as a woman; but name her not to me as a wife! No, if ever I marry, it must be a stayed, sober, considerate damsel, with blood in her veins as cold as a turtle's: quick of scent as a vulture when danger's in the wind; wary and sharp-sighted as a hawk when treachery is on foot: with such a companion at my elbow, for ever whispering in my ear—Have a care of this man, he's a cheat; don't go near that woman, she's a jilt; overhead there's a scaffold, underfoot there's a well. Oh, sir! such a woman might lead me up and down this great city without difficulty or danger; but with a girl of miss Rusport's complexion, heaven and earth, sir! we should be duped, undone, and distracted, in a fortnight.

Stock. Ha! ha! ha! Why, you are become wonderful circumspect of a sudden, pupil: and if you can find such a prudent damsel as you describe, you have my consent—only beware how you choose: discretion is not the reigning quality amongst the fine ladies of the present time; and, I think, in miss Rusport's particular, I have given you no bad counsel.

Bel. Well, well, if you'll fetch me the jewels, I believe, I can undertake to carry them to her: but as for the money, I'll have nothing to do with that: Dudley would be your fittest ambassador on that occasion: and, if I mistake not, the most agreeable to the lady.

Stock. Why, indeed, from what I know of the matter, it may not improbably be destined to find its way into his pockets. [Exit.

Bel. Then, depend upon it, these are not the only trinkets she means to dedicate to captain Dudley.—As for me, Stockwell, indeed, wants me to marry; but till I can get this bewitching girl, this incognita, out of my head, I can never think of any other woman.

Enter a Servant, and delivers a Letter.

Hey day! Where can I have picked up a correspondent already? 'Tis a most execrable manuscript—Let me see—*Martha Fulmer*—Who is *Martha Fulmer*?—

Pshaw! I won't be at the trouble of deciphering her damned pothooks.—Hold, hold, hold; what have we got here?

Dear Sir,—I have discovered the lady you was so much smitten with, and can procure you an interview with her; if you can be as generous to a pretty girl, as you was to a paltry old captain,—How did she find that out?—you need not despair; come to me immediately; the lady is now in my house, and expects you.

Yours,

MARTHA FULMER.

O thou dear, lovely, and enchanting paper! which I was about to tear into a thousand scraps, devoutly I entreat thy pardon: I have slighted thy contents, which are delicious; slandered thy characters, which are divine; and all the atonement I can make, is implicitly to obey thy mandates.

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. Mr. Belcour, here are the jewels; this letter encloses bills for the money; and, if you will deliver it to miss Rusport, you'll have no further trouble on that score.

Bel. Ah! sir, the letter, which I have been reading, disqualifies me for delivering the letter, which you have been writing; I have other game on foot; the loveliest girl my eyes ever feasted upon is started in view, and the world cannot now divert me from pursuing her.

Stock. Hey day! What has turned you thus on a sudden?

Bel. A woman; one that can turn, and overturn, me and my tottering resolutions every way she will. Oh, sir, if this is folly in me, you must rail at nature: you must chide the sun, that was vertical at my birth, and would not wink upon my nakedness, but swaddled me in the broadest, hottest glare of his meridian beams.

Stock. Mere rhapsody: mere childish rhapsody: the libertine's familiar plea—Nature made us, 'tis true, but we are the responsible creatures of our own faults and follies.

Bel. Sir!

Stock. Slave of every face you meet, some hussy has inveigled you; some handsome profligate (the town is full of them); and, when once fairly bankrupt in constitution as well as fortune, nature no longer serves as your excuse for being vicious, necessity, perhaps, will stand your friend, and you'll reform.

Bel. You are severe.

Stock. It fits me to be so—it well becomes a father—I would say, a friend—How strangely I forgot myself!—How difficult it is to counterfeit indifference, and put a mask upon the heart!

Bel. How could you tempt me so? Had you not inadvertently dropped the name of father, I fear our friendship, short as it has been, would scarce have held me—But even your mistake I reverence—Give me your hand—'tis over.

Stock. Generous young man! because I bore you the affection of a father, I rashly took up the authority of one. I ask your pardon—pursue your course; I have no right to stop it—What would you have me do with these things?

Bel. This, if I might advise; carry the money to miss Rusport immediately; never let generosity wait for its materials; that part of the business presses. Give me the jewels: I'll find an opportunity of delivering them into her hands: and your visit may pave the way for my reception. [Exit.

Stock. Be it so; good morning to you. Farewell, advice! Away goes he upon the wing for pleasure, What various passions he awakens in me! He pains, yet pleases me; affrights, offends, yet grows upon my heart. His very failings set him off—for ever trespassing, for ever atoning, I almost think he would not be so perfect, were he free from fault: I must dissemble longer; and yet how painful the experiment!—Even now he's gone upon some wild adventure; and who can tell what mischief may befall him: O nature, what it is to be a father! [Exit.

SCENE II. *FULMER's House.*

Enter FULMER and MRS. FULMER.

Ful. I tell you, Patty, you are a fool, to think of bringing him and miss Dudley together; 'twill ruin every thing, and blow your whole scheme up to the moon at once.

Mrs. Ful. Why, sure, Mr. Fulmer, I may be allowed to rear a chicken of my own hatching, as they say. Who first sprung the thought, but I, pray? Who first contrived the plot? Who proposed the letter, but I, I?

Ful. And who dogged the gentleman home? Who found out his name, fortune, connexion: that he was a West Indian, fresh landed, and full of cash; a gull to our heart's content; a hot-brained, headlong spark, that would run into our trap, like a wheatear under a turf, but I, I, I?

Mrs. Ful. Hark! he's come; disappear, march; and leave the field open to my machination. [*Exit Fulmer.*]

Enter BELCOUR.

Bel. O, thou dear minister to my happiness, let me embrace thee! Why, thou art my polar star, my propitious constellation, by which I navigate my impatient bark into the port of pleasure and delight.

Mrs. Ful. Oh, you men are sly creatures! Do you remember now, you cruel, what you said to me this morning?

Bel. All a jest, a frolic; never think on't; bury it for ever in oblivion: thou! why, thou art all over nectar and ambrosia, powder of pearl and odour of roses; thou hast the youth of Hebe, the beauty of Venus, and the pen of Sappho; but, in the name of all that's lovely, where's the lady? I expected to find her with you.

Mrs. Ful. No doubt you did, and these raptures were designed for her; but where have you loitered? the lady's gone—you are too late; girls of her sort, are not to be kept waiting, like negro slaves in your sugar plantations.

Bel. Gone! whither is she gone? tell me, that I may follow her.

Mrs. Ful. Hold, hold, not so fast, young gentleman, this is a case of some delicacy; should captain Dudley know that I introduced you to his daughter, he is a man of such scrupulous honour——

Bel. What do you tell me! is she daughter to the old gentleman I met here this morning?

Mrs. Ful. The same; him you was so generous to.

Bel. There's an end of the matter then at once; it shall never be said of me, that I took advantage of the father's necessities to trepan the daughter. [Going.

Mrs. Ful. So, so, I've made a wrong cast; he's one of your conscientious sinners, I find; but I won't lose him thus——Ha! ha! ha!

Bel. What is it you laugh at?

Mrs. Ful. Your absolute inexperience; have you lived so very little time in this country, as not to know that, between young people of equal ages, the term of sister often is a cover for that of mistress? This young lady is, in that sense of the word, sister to young Dudley, and consequently daughter to my old lodger.

Bel. Indeed! are you serious?

Mrs. Ful. Can you doubt it? I must have been pretty well assured of that, before I invited you hither.

Bel. That's true; she cannot be a woman of honour, and Dudley is an unconscionable young rogue, to think of keeping one fine girl in pay, by raising contributions on another: he shall therefore give her up: she is a dear, bewitching, mischievous little devil, and he shall positively give her up.

Mrs. Ful. Ay, now the freak has taken you again; I say give her up; there's one way, indeed, and certain of success.

Bel. What's that?

Mrs. Ful. Out-bid him, never dream of out-blustering him. All things, then, will be made easy enough; let me see; some little genteel present to begin with: what have you got about you? Ay, search; I can bestow it to advantage, there's no time to be lost.

Bel. Hang it, confound it; a plague upon't, say I! I

hav'n't a guinea left in my pocket; I parted from my whole stock here this morning, and have forgot to supply myself since.

Mrs. Ful. Mighty well; let it pass, then: there's an end; think no more of the lady, that's all.

Bel. Distraction! think no more of her? let me only step home, and provide myself; I'll be back with you in an instant.

Mrs. Ful. Pooh, pooh! that's a wretched shift; have you nothing of value about you? Money's a coarse, slovenly vehicle, fit only to bribe electors in a borough; there are more graceful ways of purchasing a lady's favours; rings, trinkets, jewels!

Bel. Jewels! Gadso, I protest I had forgot: I have a case of jewels; but they won't do, I must not part from them; no, no, they are appropriated; they are none of my own.

Mrs. Ful. Let me see, let me see! Ay, now, this were something like: pretty creatures, how they sparkle; these would ensure success.

Bel. Indeed!

Mrs. Ful. These would make her your own for ever.

Bel. Then the deuce take them, for belonging to another person; I could find in my heart to give them the girl, and swear I've lost them.

Mrs. Ful. Ay, do, say they were stolen out of your pocket.

Bel. No, hang it, that's dishonourable; here, give me the paltry things, I'll write you an order on my merchant, for double their value.

Mrs. Ful. An order! No order for me! no order upon merchants, with their value received, and three days grace; their noting, protesting, and endorsing, and all their counting-house formalities; I'll have nothing to do with them; leave your diamonds with me, and give your order for the value of them to the owner: the money would be as good as the trinkets, I warrant you.

Bel. Hey! how! I never thought of that; but a breach of trust; 'tis impossible: I never can consent, therefore give me the jewels back again.

Mrs. Ful. Take them; I am now to tell you, the lady is in this house.

Bel. In this house?

Mrs. Ful. Yes, sir, in this very house; but what of that? you have got what you like better: your toys, your trinkets; go, go; Oh! you are a man of notable spirit, are you not?

Bel. Provoking creature! bring me to the sight of the dear girl, and dispose of me as you think fit.

Mrs. Ful. And of the diamonds too?

Bel. Damn them, I would there was not such a bauble in nature! But, come, come, dispatch; if I had the throne of Delhi, I should give it to her.

Mrs. Ful. Swear to me then, that you will keep within bounds; remember, she passes for the sister of young Dudley. Oh! if you come to your flights and your rhapsodies, she'll be off in an instant.

Bel. Never fear me.

Mrs. Ful. You must expect to hear her talk of her father, as she calls him, and her brother, and your bounty to her family.

Bel. Ay, ay, never mind what she talks of, only bring her.

Mrs. Ful. You'll be prepared upon that head?

Bel. I shall be prepared, never fear: away with you.

Mrs. Ful. But, hold, I had forgot: not a word of the diamonds; leave that matter to my management.

Bel. Hell and vexation! Get out of the room, or I shall run distracted. [*Exit Mrs. Fulmer*] Of a certain, Belcour, thou art born to be the fool of woman! sure no man sins with so much repentance, or repents with so little amendment, as I do. I cannot give away another person's property, honour forbids me; and I positively cannot give up the girl; love, passion, constitution, every thing protests against that. How shall I decide? I cannot bring myself to break a trust, and I am not at present in the humour to baulk my inclinations. Is there no middle way? Let me consider—
There is, there is: my good genius has presented me with one: apt, obvious, honourable, the girl shall not go without her baubles: I'll not go without the girl;

miss Rusport shan't lose her diamonds; I'll save Dudley from destruction, and every party shall be a gainer by the project.

Enter MRS. FULMER, introducing Miss DUDLEY.

Mrs. Ful. Miss Dudley, this is the worthy gentleman you wish to see; this is Mr. Belcour.

Lou. As I live, the very man that beset me in the streets!

Bel. An angel, by this light! Oh, I am gone, past all retrieving!

Lou. Mrs. Fulmer, sir, informs me, you are the gentleman from whom my father has received such civilities.

Bel. Her father! [*Aside*] Oh, never name them.

Lou. Pardon me, Mr. Belcour, they must be both named and remembered; and if my father was here—

Bel. Her father again! [*Aside*] I am much better pleased with his representative.

Lou. That title is my brother's, sir; I have no claim to it.

Bel. I believe it.

Lou. But as neither he nor my father were fortunate enough to be at home, I could not resist the opportunity—

Bel. Nor I neither, by my soul, madam: let us improve it, therefore. I am in love with you to distraction; I was charmed at the first glance; I attempted to accost you; you fled; I followed; but was defeated of an interview; at length I have obtained one, and seize the opportunity of casting my person and my fortune at your feet.

Lou. You astonish me! Are you in your senses, or do you make a jest of my misfortunes? Do you ground pretences on your generosity, or do you make a practice of this folly with every woman you meet?

Bel. Upon my life, no: as you are the handsomest woman I ever met, so you are the first to whom I ever made the like professions: as for my generosity, madam, I must refer you on that score to this good lady, who I believe has something to offer in my behalf.

Lou. Don't build upon that, sir; I must have better proofs of your generosity, than the mere divestment of a little superfluous dress, before I can credit the sincerity of professions so abruptly delivered.

[Exit hastily.

Bel. Oh! ye gods and goddesses, how her anger animates her beauty!

[Going out.

Mrs. Ful. Stay, sir; if you stir a step after her, I renounce your interest for ever; why, you'll ruin every thing.

Bel. Well, I must have her, cost what it will: I see she understands her own value though; a little superfluous dress, truly! She must have better proofs of my generosity.

Mrs. Ful. 'Tis exactly as I told you; your money she calls dress; she's too proud to stain her fingers with your coin; bait your hook well with jewels; try that experiment, and she's your own.

Bel. Take them; let them go; lay them at her feet; I must get out of the scrape as I can; my propensity is irresistible: there; you have them; they are yours; they are hers; but, remember, they are a trust; I commit them to her keeping, till I can buy them off, with something she shall think more valuable; now tell me when shall I meet her?

Mrs. Ful. How can I tell that? Don't you see what an alarm you have put her into? Oh! you're a rare one! But go your ways for this while; leave her to my management, and come to me at seven this evening; but remember not to bring empty pockets with you—
Ha! ha! ha!

[Exeunt severally.

SCENE. III. LADY RUSPORT'S House.

Enter MISS RUSPORT, followed by a Servant.

Miss R. Desire Mr. Stockwell to walk in.

[Exit Servant.

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. Madam, your most obedient servant: I am honoured with your commands, by captain Dudley;

and have brought the money with me, as you directed ; I understand the sum you have occasion for is two hundred pounds.

Miss R. It is, sir ; I am quite confounded at your taking this trouble upon yourself, Mr. Stockwell.

Stock. There is a Bank note, madam, to the amount ; your jewels are in safe hands, and will be delivered to you directly. . If I had been happy in being better known to you, I should have hoped you would not have thought it necessary to place a deposit in my hands for so trifling a sum as you have now required me to supply you with.

Miss R. The baubles I sent you may very well be spared ; and, as they are the only security, in my present situation, I can give you, I could wish you would retain them in your hands : when I am of age (which if I live a few months I shall be), I will replace your favour, with thanks.

Stock. It is obvious, miss Rasport, that your charms will suffer no impeachment by the absence of those superficial ornaments ; but they should be seen in the suite of a woman of fashion, not as creditors to whom you are indebted for your appearance, but as subservient attendants, which help to make up your equipage.

Miss R. Mr. Stockwell is determined not to wrong the confidence I reposed in his politeness.

Stock. I have only to request, madam, that you will allow Mr. Belcour, a young gentleman, in whose happiness I particularly interest myself, to have the honour of delivering you the box of jewels.

Miss R. Most gladly ; any friend of yours cannot fail of being welcome here.

Stock. I flatter myself you will not find him totally undeserving your good opinion ; an education not of the strictest kind, and strong animal spirits, are apt sometimes to betray him into youthful irregularities ; but a high principle of honour, and an uncommon benevolence, in the eye of candour, will, I hope, atone for any faults, by which these good qualities are not impaired.

Miss R. I dare say Mr. Belcour's behaviour wants no apology: we have no right to be over strict in canvassing the morals of a common acquaintance.

Stock. I wish it may be my happiness to see Mr. Belcour in the list, not of your common, but particular acquaintance—of your friends, miss Rusport—I dare not be more explicit.

Miss R. Nor need you, Mr. Stookwell: I shall be studious to deserve his friendship; and, though I have long since unalterably placed my affections on another, I trust, I have not left myself insensible to the merits of Mr. Belcour; and hope, that neither you nor he will, for that reason, think me less worthy your good opinion and regards.

Stock. Miss Rusport, I sincerely wish you happy: I have no doubt you have placed your affection on a deserving man; and I have no right to combat your choice. [Exit.]

Miss R. How honourable is that behaviour! Now, if Charles was here, I should be happy. The old lady is so fond of her new Irish acquaintance, that I have the whole house at my disposal. [Exit.]

Enter BELCOUR, preceded by a Servant.

Serv. I ask your honour's pardon; I thought my young lady was here: who shall I inform her would speak to her?

Bel. Belcour is my name, sir; and pray beg your lady to put herself in no hurry on my account; for I'd sooner see the devil, than see her face. [Exit Servant]
In the name of all that's mischievous, why did Stockwell drive me hither in such haste? A pretty figure, truly, I shall make! an ambassador, without credentials! Blockhead that I was, to charge myself with her diamonds; officious, meddling puppy! Now they are irretrievably gone: that suspicious jade, Fulmer, wouldn't part even with a sight of them, though I would have ransomed them at twice their value. Now must I trust to my poor wits, to bring me off: a lamentable dependence. Fortune be my helper; Here comes the girl—If

she is noble-minded, as she is said to be, she will forgive me; if not, 'tis a lost cause; for I have not thought of one word in my excuse.

Enter Miss Rusport.

Miss R. Mr. Belcour, I'm proud to see you: your friend, Mr. Stockwell, prepared me to expect this honour; and I am happy in the opportunity of being known to you.

Bel. A fine girl, by my soul! Now what a cursed hang dog do I look like! [*Aside.*]

Miss R. You are newly arrived in this country, sir?

Bel. Just landed, madam; just set ashore, with a large cargo of Muscavado sugars, rum puncheons, mahogany slabs, wet sweetmeats, and green paroquets.

Miss R. May I ask you how you like London, sir?

Bel. To admiration: I think the town and the town's folk are exactly suited; 'tis a great, rich, overgrown, noisy, tumultuous place: the whole morning is a bustle to get money, and the whole afternoon is a hurry to spend it.

Miss R. Are these all the observations you have made?

Bel. No, madam; I have observed the women are very captivating, and the men very soon caught.

Miss R. Ay, indeed! Whence do you draw that conclusion?

Bel. From infallible guides; the first remark I collect from what I now see, the second from what I now feel.

Miss R. Oh, the deuce take you! But, to wave this subject; I believe, sir, this was a visit of business, not compliment; was it not?

Bel. Ay; now comes on my execution.

Miss R. You have some foolish trinkets of mine, Mr. Belcour; hav'n't you?

Bel. No, in truth; they are gone in search of a trinket, still more foolish than themselves. [*Aside.*]

Miss R. Some diamonds I mean, sir; Mr. Stockwell informed me you was charged with them.

Bel. Oh, yes, madam; but I have the most trea-

cherous memory in life—Here they are! Pray put them up; they're all right; you need not examine them.

[Gives a Box.]

Miss R. Hey day! right, sir! Why these are not my diamonds; these are quite different; and, as it should seem, of much greater value.

Bel. Upon my life I'm glad on't; for then I hope you value them more than your own.

Miss R. As a purchaser I should, but not as an owner; you mistake; these belong to somebody else.

Bel. 'Tis yours, I'm afraid, that belong to somebody else.

[Aside.]

Miss R. What is it you mean? I must insist upon your taking them back again.

Bel. Pray, madam, don't do that; I shall infallibly lose them; I have the worst luck with diamonds of any man living.

Miss R. That you might well say, was you to give me these in the place of mine; but, pray, sir, what is the reason of all this? Why have you changed the jewels? And where have you disposed of mine?

Bel. Miss Rusport, I cannot invent a lie for my life; and, if it was to save it, I couldn't tell one: I am an idle, dissipated, unthinking fellow, not worth your notice: in short, I am a West Indian; and you must try me according to the charter of my colony, not by a jury of English spinsters: the truth is, I have given away your jewels; caught with a pair of sparkling eyes, whose lustre blinded theirs, I served your property as I should my own, and lavished it away; let me not totally despair of your forgiveness; I frequently do wrong, but never with impunity; if your displeasure is added to my own, my punishment will be too severe. When I parted from the jewels, I had not the honour of knowing their owner.

Miss R. Mr. Belcour, your sincerity charms me; I enter at once into your character, and I make all the allowances for it you can desire. I take your jewels for the present, because I know there is no other way of reconciling you to yourself; but, if I give way to

your spirit in one point, you must yield to mine in another: remember, I will not keep more than the value of my own jewels: there is no need to be pillaged by more than one woman at a time, sir.

Bel. Now, may every blessing that can crown your virtues, and reward your beauty, be shower'd upon you; may you meet admiration without envy, love without jealousy, and old age without malady; may the man of your heart be ever constant, and you never meet a less penitent, or less grateful offender, than myself!

Enter Servant, and delivers a Letter.

Miss R. Does your letter require such haste?

Serv. I was bade to give it into your own hands, madam.

Miss R. From Charles Dudley, I see—have I your permission? Good heaven, what do I read! Mr. Belcour, you are concerned in this—— [Reads.]

*Dear Charlotte—*In the midst of our distress, Providence has cast a benefactor in our way, after the most unexpected manner: a young West Indian, rich, and with a warmth of heart peculiar to his climate, has rescued my father from his troubles, satisfied his wants, and enabled him to accomplish his exchange: when I relate to you the manner in which this was done, you will be charmed: I can only now add, that it was by chance we found out that his name is Belcour, and that he is a friend of Mr. Stockwell's. I lose not a moment's time, in making you acquainted with this fortunate event, for reasons which delicacy obliges me to suppress; but, perhaps, if you have not received the money on your jewels, you will not think it necessary now to do it. I have the honour to be, dear madam, most faithfully yours,

CHARLES DUDLEY.

Is this your doing, sir? Never was generosity so worthily exerted.

Bel. Or so greatly overpaid.

Miss R. After what you have now done for this noble, but indigent family, let me not scruple to unfold the whole situation of my heart to you. Know then, sir (and don't think the worse of me for the frankness of

my declaration), that such is my attachment to the son of that worthy officer, whom you relieved, that the moment I am of age, and in possession of my fortune, I should hold myself the happiest of women to share it with young Dudley.

Bel. Say you so, madam! then let me perish if I don't love and reverence you above all womankind; and, if such is your generous resolution, never wait till you are of age; life is too short, pleasure too fugitive; the soul grows narrower every hour. I'll equip you for your escape—I'll convey you to the man of your heart, and away with you then to the first hospitable parson that will take you in.

Miss R. O blessed be the torrid zone for ever, whose rapid vegetation quickens nature into such benignity! But, had I spirit to accept your offer, which is not improbable, wouldn't it be a mortifying thing, for a fond girl to find herself mistaken, and sent back to her home, like a vagrant?—and such, for what I know, might be my case.

Bel. Then he ought to be proscribed the society of mankind for ever—Ay, ay, 'tis the sham sister, that makes him thus indifferent; 'twill be a meritorious office, to take that girl out of the way. [*Aside.*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Miss Dudley, to wait on you, madam.

Bel. Who?

Serv. Miss Dudley.

Miss R. What's the matter, Mr. Belcour? Are you frightened at the name of a pretty girl?—'Tis the sister of him we were speaking of—Pray admit her.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Bel. The sister!—So, so; he has imposed on her too—this is an extraordinary visit, truly. Upon my soul, the assurance of some folks is not to be accounted for.

[*Aside.*]

Miss R. I insist upon your not running away;—you'll be charmed with Louisa Dudley.

Bel. Oh yes, I am charmed with her.

Miss R. You have seen her then, have you?

Bel. Yes, yes, I've seen her.

Miss R. Well, isn't she a delightful girl?

Bel. Very delightful.

Miss R. Why, you answer as if you was in a court of justice. O'my conscience, I believe you are caught; I've a notion she has tricked you out of your heart.

Bel. I believe she has, and you out of your jewels; for, to tell you the truth, she's the very person I gave them to.

Miss R. You gave her my jewels! Louisa Dudley my jewels! admirable! inimitable! Oh, the sly little jade!—but, hush! here she comes; I don't know how I shall keep my countenance.

Enter LOUISA.

My dear, I'm rejoiced to see you; how do you do?—I beg leave to introduce Mr. Belcour, a very worthy friend of mine. I believe, Louisa, you have seen him before.

Lou. I have met the gentleman.

Miss R. You have met the gentleman!—well, sir, and you have met the lady; in short, you have met each other, why, then, don't you speak to each other? How you both stand! tongue-tied and fixed as statues—Ha! ha! ha! Why, you'll fall asleep by-and-by.

Lou. Fie upon you, fie upon you! is this fair?

Bel. Upon my soul, I never looked so like a fool in my life—the assurance of that girl puts me quite down.

[*Aside.*

Miss R. Sir—Mr. Belcour—Was it your pleasure to advance any thing? Not a syllable. Come, Louisa, woman's wit, they say, is never at a loss—Nor you neither?—Speechless both—Why, you was merry enough before this lady came in.

Lou. I am sorry I have been any interruption to your happiness, sir.

Bel. Madam!

Miss R. Madam! Is that all you can say? But come, my dear girl, I wont tease you—apropos! I must show you what a present this dumb gentleman has made me—Are not these handsome diamonds?

Lou. Yes, indeed, they seem very fine; but I am no judge of these things.

Miss R. Oh, you wicked little hypocrite; you are no judge of these things, Louisa; you have no diamonds, not you.

Lou. You know I haven't, miss Rusport: you know those things are infinitely above my reach.

Miss R. Ha! ha! ha!

Bel. She does tell a lie with an admirable countenance, that's true enough. [*Aside.*

Lou. What ails you, Charlotte?—What impertinence have I been guilty of, that you should find it necessary to humble me at such a rate?—If you are happy, long may you be so: but, surely, it can be no addition to it to make me miserable.

Miss R. So serious; there must be some mystery in this—Mr. Belcour, will you leave us together? You see I treat you with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance already.

Bel. Oh, by all means; pray command me. Miss Rusport, I am your most obedient! By your condescension in accepting these poor trifles, I am under eternal obligations to you.—To you, miss Dudley, I shall no offer a word on that subject;—you despise finery; you have a soul above it; I adore your spirit; I was rather unprepared for meeting you here, but I shall hope for an opportunity of making myself better known to you. [*Exit.*

Miss R. Louisa Dudley, you surprise me; I never saw you act thus before: can't you bear a little innocent raillery before the man of your heart?

Lou. The man of my heart, madam! Be assured I never was so visionary to aspire to any man whom miss Rusport honours with her choice.

Miss R. My choice, my dear! Why, we are playing at cross-purposes: how entered it into your head that Mr. Belcour was the man of my choice?

Lou. Why, didn't he present you with those diamonds?

Miss R. Well: perhaps he did—and pray, Louisa, have you no diamonds?

Lou. I diamonds, truly! Who should give me diamonds?

Miss R. Who but this very gentleman: apropos! here comes your brother——

Enter CHARLES.

I insist upon referring our dispute to him: your sister and I, Charles, have a quarrel; Belcour, the hero of your letter, has just left us—somehow or other, Louisa's bright eyes have caught him; and the poor fellow's fallen desperately in love with her—(don't interrupt me, hussy)—Well, that's excusable enough, you'll say; but the jest of the story is, that this hair-brain'd spark, who does nothing like other people, has given her the very identical jewels, which you pledged for me to Mr. Stockwell; and will you believe that this little demure slut made up a face, and squeezed out three or four hypocritical tears, because I rallied her about it?

Charles. I'm all astonishment! Louisa, tell me, without reserve, has Mr. Belcour given you any diamonds.

Lou. None, upon my honour.

Charles. Has he made any professions to you?

Lou. He has; but altogether in a style so whimsical and capricious, that the best which can be said of them is to tell you, that they seemed more the result of good spirits than good manners.

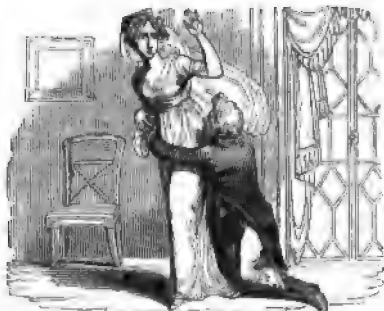
Miss R. Ay, ay, now the murder's out; he's in love with her, and she has no very great dislike to him; trust to my observations, Charles, for that: as to the diamonds, there's some mistake about them, and you must clear it up: three minutes conversation with him will put every thing in a right train: go, go, Charles, 'tis a brother's business; about it instantly; ten to one you'll find him over the way, at Mr. Stockwell's.

Charles. I confess I'm impatient to have the case cleared up; I'll take your advice, and find him out: good bye to you.

Miss R. Your servant: my life upon it, you'll find Belcour a man of honour. Come, Louisa, let us adjourn to my dressing-room; I've a little private business to transact with you, before the old lady comes up to tea, and interrupts us.

[*Exit.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. *A Room in FULMER's House.*

Enter FULMER and MRS. FULMER.

Ful. Patty, wasn't Mr. Belcour with you?

Mrs. Ful. He was; and is now shut up in my chamber, in high expectation of an interview with miss Dudley: she's at present with her brother, and 'twas with some difficulty I persuaded my hot-headed spark to wait till he has left her.

Ful. Well, child, and what then?

Mrs. Ful. Why, then, Mr. Fulmer, I think it will be time for you and me to steal a march, and be gone.

Ful. So this is all the fruit of your ingenious project; a shameful overthrow, or a sudden flight.

Mrs. Ful. Why, my project was a mere impromptu, and can at worst but quicken our departure a few days; you know we had fairly outliv'd our credit here, and a trip to Boulogne is no ways unseasonable. Nay, never droop, man—Hark! hark! here's enough to bear charges.

[Showing a Purse.]

Ful. Let me see, let me see: this weighs well; this is of the right sort: why your West Indian bled freely.

Mrs. Ful. But that's not all: look here! Here are the sparklers! [*Showing the Jewels*] Now what d'ye think of my performances? Heh! a foolish scheme, isn't it—a silly woman—

Ful. Thou art a Judith, a Joan of Arc, and I'll march under thy banners, girl, to the world's end: come, let's be gone; I've little to regret; my creditors may share the old books amongst them; they'll have occasion for philosophy to support their loss; they'll find enough upon my shelves: the world is my library; I read mankind—Now, Patty, lead the way.

Mrs. Ful. Adieu, Belcour.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY and LOUISA.

Charles. Well, Louisa, I confess the force of what you say: I accept miss Rusport's bounty; and when you see my generous Charlotte, tell her—but have a care, there is a selfishness even in gratitude, when it is too profuse; to be overthankful for any one favour, is in effect to lay out for another; the best return I could make my benefactress would be, never to see her more.

Lou. I understand you.

Charles. We, that are poor, Louisa, should be cautious: for this reason, I would guard you against Belcour; at least, till I can unravel the mystery of miss Rusport's diamonds; I was disappointed of finding him at Mr. Stockwell's, and am now going in search of him again: he may intend honourably; but, I confess to you, I am staggered; think no more of him, therefore, for the present: of this be sure, while I have life and you have honour, I will protect you, or perish in your defence.

[*Exit.*]

Lou. Think of him no more! Well, I'll obey; but if a wandering, uninvited thought should creep by chance into my bosom, must I not give the harmless wretch a shelter? Fie, fie upon it! Belcour pursues, insults me; yet, such is the fatality of my condition, that what should rouse resentment, only calls up love.

Enter BELCOUR.

Bel. Alone, by all that's happy!

Lou. Ah!

Bel. Oh! shriek not, start not, stir not, loveliest creature! but let me kneel and gaze upon your beauties.

Lou. Sir! Mr. Belcour, rise! What is it you do? Should he that parted from me but this minute, now return, I tremble for the consequence.

Bel. Fear nothing; let him come: I love you, madam; he'll find it hard to make me unsay that.

Lou. You terrify me; your impetuous temper frightens me; you know my situation; it is not generous to pursue me thus.

Bel. True, I do know your situation, your real one, miss Dudley, and am resolved to snatch you from it; 'twill be a meritorious act; the old captain shall rejoice; miss Rusport shall be made happy; and even he, even your beloved brother, with whose resentment you threaten me, shall in the end applaud and thank me. Come, thou art a dear enchanting girl, and I'm determined not to live a minute longer without thee.

Lou. Hold! are you mad? I see you are a bold assuming man; and know not where to stop.

Bel. Who that beholds such beauty can? Provoking girl! is it within the stretch of my fortune to content you? What is it you can further ask, that I am not ready to grant?

Lou. Yes, with the same facility, that you bestowed upon me miss Rusport's diamonds. For shame! for shame! was that a manly story?

Bel. So! so! these devilish diamonds meet me every where. Let me perish if I meant you any harm: Oh! I could tear my tongue out for saying a word about the matter.

Lou. Go to her then, and contradict it; till that is done, my reputation is at stake.

Bel. Her reputation!—Now she has got upon that, she'll go on for ever. [*Aside*].—What is there I will not do for your sake? I will go to miss Rusport.

Lou. Do so; restore her own jewels to her, which I

suppose you kept back for the purpose of presenting others to her of a greater value; but for the future, Mr. Belcour, when you would do a gallant action to that lady, don't let it be at my expense.

Bel. I see where she points: she is willing enough to give up miss Rusport's diamonds, now she finds she shall be a gainer by the exchange. Be it so! 'tis what I wished.—Well, madam, I will return to miss Rusport her own jewels, and you shall have others of tenfold their value.

Lou. No, sir, you err most widely; it is my good opinion, not my vanity, which you must bribe.

Bel. Why what the devil would she have now?—Miss Dudley, it is my wish to obey and please you; but I have some apprehension that we mistake each other.

Lou. I think we do: tell me, then, in few words, what it is you aim at.

Bel. In few words, then, and in plain honesty, I must tell you, so entirely am I captivated with you, that had you but been such as it would have become me to have called my wife, I had been happy in knowing you by that name; as it is, you are welcome to partake my fortune, give me in return your person, give me pleasure, give me love; free, disencumbered, antimatrimonial love.

Lou. Stand off, and never let me see you more.

Bel. Hold, hold, thou dear, tormenting, tantalizing girl! Upon my knees, I swear you shall not stir till you have consented to my bliss.

Lou. Unhand me, sir: O, Charles! protect me, rescue me, redress me. [Exit.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Charles. How's this?—Rise, villain, and defend yourself.

Bel. Villain!

Charles. The man who wrongs that lady is a villain—Draw!

Bel. Never fear me, young gentleman; brand me for a coward if I baulk you.

Charles. Yet hold! let me not be too hasty: your name, I think, is Belcour.

Bel. Well, sir.

Charles. How is it, Mr. Belcour, you have done this mean, unmanly wrong; beneath the mask of generosity, to give this fatal stab to our domestic peace? You might have had my thanks, my blessing: take my defiance now. 'Tis Dudley speaks to you; the brother, the protector, of that injured lady.

Bel. The brother! give yourself a truer title.

Charles. What is't you mean?

Bel. Come, come, I know both her and you: I found you, sir (but how or why I know not), in the good graces of miss Rusport—(yes, colour at that name) I gave you no disturbance there, never broke in upon you in that rich and plenteous quarter, but, when I could have blasted all your projects with a word, spared you, in foolish pity spared you, nor roused her from the fond credulity in which your artifice had lulled her.

Charles. No, sir, nor boasted to her of the splendid present you had made my poor Louisa; the diamonds, Mr. Belcour: how was that? What can you plead to that arraignment?

Bel. You question me too late; the name of Belcour and of villain never met before; had you inquired of me before you uttered that rash word, you might have saved yourself or me a mortal error; now, sir, I neither give nor take an explanation; so, come on!

[*They fight.*]

Enter LOUISA and O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. Hold, hold, for heaven's sake!

O'Fla. Hell and confusion! What's all this uproar for? Can't you leave off cutting one another's throats, and mind what the poor girl says to you? You've done a notable thing, hav'n't you both, to put her into such a flurry? I think, o'my conscience, she's the most frightened of the three.

Charles. Dear Louisa, recollect yourself; why did you interfere? 'tis in your cause.

Bel. Now could I kill him for caressing her.

O'Fla. O sir, your most obedient! You are the gentleman I had the honour of meeting here before; you was then running off at full speed, like a Calmuck, now you are tilting and driving like a bedlamite, with this lad here, that seems as mad as yourself: 'tis pity but your country had a little more employment for you both.

Bel. Mr. Dudley, when you have recovered the lady, you know where I am to be found. [Exit.]

O'Fla. Well, then, can't you stay where you are, and that will save the trouble of looking after you? You volatile fellow thinks to give a man the meeting by getting out of his way: by my soul, 'tis a roundabout method that of his. But I think he called you Dudley: harkye, young man, are you son of my friend, the old captain?

Charles. I am. Help me to convey this lady to her chamber, and I shall be more at leisure to answer your questions.

O'Fla. Ay, will I: come along, pretty one; if you've had wrong done you, young man, you need look no further for a second; Dennis O'Flaherty's your man for that: but never draw your sword before a woman, Dudley; damn it, never while you live draw your sword before a woman. [Exit.]

SCENE II. LADY RUSPORT'S House.

Enter LADY RUSPORT and Servant.

Serv. An elderly gentleman, who says his name is Varland, desires leave to wait on your ladyship.

Lady R. Show him in: the very man I wish to see. Varland, he was sir Oliver's solicitor, and privy to all his affairs: he brings some good tidings; some fresh mortgage, or another bond come to light; they start up every day.

Enter VARLAND.

Mr. Varland, I'm glad to see you; you are heartily welcome, honest Mr. Varland; you and I hav'n't met

since our late irreparable loss: how have you passed your time this age?

Var. Truly, my lady, ill enough: I thought I must have followed good sir Oliver.

Lady R. Alack-a-day, poor man! Well, Mr. Varland, you find me here overwhelmed with trouble and fatigue; torn to pieces with a multiplicity of affairs; a great fortune poured upon me, unsought for and unexpected: 'twas my good father's will and pleasure it should be so, and I must submit.

Var. Your ladyship inherits under a will made in the year forty-five, immediately after captain Dudley's marriage with your sister.

Lady R. I do so, Mr. Varland; I do so.

Var. I well remember it; I engrossed every syllable; but I am surprised to find your ladyship set so little store by this vast accession.

Lady R. Why, you know, Mr. Varland, I am a moderate woman; I had enough before; a small matter satisfies me; and sir Stephen Rusport (heaven be his portion!) took care I shouldn't want that.

Var. Very true, very true; he did so; and I am overjoyed to find your ladyship in this disposition; for, truth to say, I was not without apprehension the news I have to communicate would have been of some prejudice to your ladyship's tranquillity.

Lady R. News, sir! what news have you for me?

Var. Nay, nothing to alarm you; a trifle in your present way of thinking: I have a will of sir Oliver's, you have never seen.

Lady R. A will! impossible! how came you by it, pray?

Var. I drew it up, at his command, in his last illness: it will save you a world of trouble; it gives his whole estate from you to his grandson, Charles Dudley.

Lady R. To Dudley! his estate to Charles Dudley? I can't support it! I shall faint! You have killed me, you vile man! I never shall survive it!

Var. Lookye there, now: I protest, I thought you would have rejoiced at being clear of the encumbrance.

Lady R. 'Tis false; 'tis all a forgery, concerted between you and Dudley; why else did I never hear of it before?

Var. Have patience, my lady, and I'll tell you: By sir Oliver's direction, I was to deliver this will into no hands but his grandson Dudley's: the young gentleman happened to be then in Scotland; I was dispatched thither in search of him: the hurry and fatigue of my journey brought on a fever by the way, which confined me in extreme danger for several days; upon my recovery, I pursued my journey, found young Dudley had left Scotland in the interim, and am now directed hither; where, as soon as I can find him, doubtless, I shall discharge my conscience, and fulfil my commission.

Lady R. Dudley then, as yet, knows nothing of this will?

Var. Nothing: that secret rests with me.

Lady R. A thought occurs: by this fellow's talking of his conscience, I should guess it was upon sale. [*Aside*—Come, Mr. Varland, if 'tis as you say, I must submit. I was somewhat flurried at first, and forgot myself: I ask your pardon: this is no place to talk of business; step with me into my room; we will there compare the will, and resolve accordingly — Oh! would your fever had you, and I had your paper!

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Miss RUSPORT, CHARLES, and O'FLAHERTY.

Miss R. So, so! My lady and her lawyer have retired to close confabulation: now, major, if you are the generous man I take you for, grant me one favour.

O'Fla. 'Faith will I, and not think much of my generosity neither; for, though it may not be in my power to do the favour you ask, look you, it can never be in my heart to refuse it.

Charles. Could this man's tongue do justice to his thoughts, how eloquent would he be! [*Aside.*]

Miss R. Plant yourself, then, in that room: keep guard for a few moments upon the enemy's motions in

the chamber beyond; and if they should attempt a sally, stop their march a moment, till your friend here can make good his retreat down the back stairs.

O'Fla. A word to the wise! I'm an old campaigner: make the best use of your time; and trust me for tying the old cat up to the picket.

Miss R. Hush! hush! not so loud.

Charles. 'Tis the office of a sentinel, major, you have undertaken, rather than that of a field-officer.

O'Fla. 'Tis the office of a friend, my dear boy; and therefore no disgrace to a general. [Exit.

Miss R. Well, Charles, will you commit yourself to me for a few minutes?

Charles. Most readily; and let me, before one goes by, tender you the only payment I can ever make for your abundant generosity.

Miss R. Hold, hold! so vile a thing as money must not come between us. What shall I say? O Charles! O Dudley! What difficulties have you thrown upon me! Familiarly as we have lived, I shrink not at what I am doing; and anxiously as I have sought this opportunity, my fears almost persuade me to abandon it.

Charles. You alarm me!

Miss R. Your looks and actions have been so distant, and at this moment are so deterring, that, was it not for the hope that delicacy, and not disgust, inspires this conduct in you, I should sink with shame and apprehension; but time presses; and I must speak, and plainly too—Was you now in possession of your grandfather's estate, as justly you ought to be, and was you inclined to seek a companion for life, should you, or should you not, in that case, honour your unworthy Charlotte with your choice?

Charles. My unworthy Charlotte! So judge me, heaven, there is not a circumstance on earth so valuable as your happiness, so dear to me as your person; but to bring poverty, disgrace, reproach from friends, ridicule from all the world, upon a generous benefactress; thievishly to steal into an open and unreserved ingenuous heart, O Charlotte! dear unhappy girl, it is not to be done.

Miss R. Come, my dear Charles, I have enough; make that enough still more by sharing it with me: sole heiress of my father's fortune, a short time will put it in my disposal; in the mean while you will be sent to join your regiment; let us prevent a separation, by setting out this very night for that happy country, where marriage still is free: carry me this moment to Belcour's lodgings.

Charles. Belcour's?—The name is ominous; there's murder in it: bloody, inexorable honour! [*Aside.*

Miss R. D'ye pause? Put me into his hands, while you provide the means for our escape: he is the most generous, the most honourable of men.

Charles. Honourable! most honourable!

Miss R. Can you doubt it? Do you demur? Have you forgot your letter? Why, Belcour 'twas that prompted me to this proposal, that promised to supply the means, that nobly offered his unasked assistance——

Enter O'FLAHERTY, hastily.

O'Fla. Run, run; for holy St. Anthony's sake, to horse, and away! The conference is broke up, and the enemy advances upon a full Piedmontese trot, within pistol-shot of your encampment.

Miss R. Here, here, down the back stairs! O Charles, remember me!

Charles. Farewell! Now, now I feel myself a coward. [*Exit.*

Miss R. What does he mean?

O'Fla. Ask no questions, but be gone: she has cooled the lad's courage, and wonders he feels like a coward. There's a damned deal of mischief brewing between this hyena and her lawyer: 'egad I'll step behind this screen and listen: a good soldier must sometimes fight in ambush, as well as open field. [*Retires.*

Enter VARLAND.

Var. Let me consider—Five thousand pounds, prompt payment, for destroying this scrap of paper, not worth five farthings; 'tis a fortune easily earned; yes, and 'tis another man's fortune easily thrown away; 'tis

a good round sum, to be paid down at once for a bribe: but 'tis a damned rogue's trick in me to take it.

O'Fla. So, so! this fellow speaks truth to himself, though he lies to other people. [*Aside.*

Var. 'Tis breaking the trust of my benefactor, that's a foul crime; but he's dead, and can never reproach me with it: and 'tis robbing young Dudley of his lawful patrimony, that's a hard case; but he's alive, and knows nothing of the matter.

O'Fla. These lawyers are so used to bring off the rogueries of others, that they are never without an excuse for their own. [*Aside.*

Var. Were I assured now that Dudley would give me half the money for producing this will, that lady Rusport does for concealing it, I would deal with him, and be an honest man at half price: and I wish every gentleman of my profession could lay his hand on his heart, and say the same thing.

O'Fla. A bargain, old gentleman! Nay, never start nor stare; you was'nt afraid of your own conscience, never be afraid of me.

Var. Of you, sir! who are you, pray?

O'Fla. I'll tell you who I am: you seem to wish to be honest, but want the heart to set about it; now I am the very man in the world to make you so; for if you do not give up that paper this very instant, by the soul of me, fellow, I will not leave one whole bone in your skin that shan't be broken.

Var. What right have you, pray, to take this paper from me?

O'Fla. What right have you, pray, to keep it from young Dudley? I don't know what it contains, but I am apt to think it will be safer in my hands than in yours; therefore give it me without more words, and save yourself a beating: do now; you had best.

Var. Well, sir, I may as well make a grace of necessity. There; I have acquitted my conscience, at the expense of five thousand pounds.

O'Fla. Five thousand pounds! Mercy upon me!

When there are such temptations in the law, can we wonder if some of the corps are a disgrace to it?

Var. Well, you have got the paper; if you are an honest man, give it to Charles Dudley.

O'Fla. An honest man! look at me, friend, I am a soldier, this is not the livery of a knave; I am an Irishman, honey; mine is not the country of dishonour. Now, sirrah, be gone; if you enter these doors, or give lady Rusport the least item of what has passed, I will cut off both your ears, and rob the pillory of its due.

Var. I wish I was once fairly out of his sight.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *A Room in STOCKWELL'S House.*

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. I must disclose myself to Belcour; this noble instance of his generosity which old Dudley has been relating, allies me to him at once; concealment becomes too painful; I shall be proud to own him for my son—But see, he's here.

Enter BELCOUR, and throws himself upon a Sofa.

Bel. O my curs'd tropical constitution! 'Would to heaven I had been dropped upon the snows of Lapland, and never felt the blessed influence of the sun, so I had never burnt with these inflammatory passions!

Stock. So, so, you seem disordered, Mr. Belcour.

Bel. Disordered, sir! 'Why did I ever quit the soil in which I grew; what evil planet drew me from that warm, sunny region, where naked nature walks without disguise, into this cold, contriving, artificial country.

Stock. Come, sir, you've met a rascal; what o'that? general conclusions are illiberal.

Bel. No, sir, I have met reflection by the way; I have come from folly, noise, and fury, and met a silent monitor—Well, well, a villain! 'twas not to be pardoned—pray never mind me, sir.

Stock. Alas! my heart bleeds for him.

Bel. And yet, I might have heard him: now, plague upon that blundering Irishman, for coming in as he

did; the hurry of the deed might palliate the event: deliberate execution has less to plead—Mr. Stockwell, I am bad company to you.

Stock. Oh, sir, make no excuse. I think you have not found me forward to pry into the secrets of your pleasures and pursuits; 'tis not my disposition; but there are times, when want of curiosity would be want of friendship.

Bel. Ah, sir, mine is a case wherein you and I shall never think alike.

Stock. 'Tis very well, sir; if you think I can render you any service, it may be worth your trial to confide in me; if not, your secret is safer in your own bosom.

Bel. That sentiment demands my confidence: pray, sit down by me. You must know, I have an affair of honour on my hands with young Dudley; and, though I put up with no man's insult, yet I wish to take away no man's life.

Stock. I know the young man, and am apprised of your generosity to his father; what can have bred a quarrel between you?

Bel. A foolish passion on my side, and a haughty provocation on his. There is a girl, Mr. Stockwell, whom I have unfortunately seen, of most uncommon beauty; she has withal an air of so much natural modesty, that, had I not had good assurance of her being an attainable wanton, I declare I should as soon have thought of attempting the chastity of Diana.

Enter Servant.

Stock. Hey day, do you interrupt us?

Serv. Sir, there's an Irish gentleman will take no denial: he says he must see Mr. Belcour directly, upon business of the last consequence.

Bel. Admit him: 'tis the Irish officer that parted us, and brings me young Dudley's challenge; I should have made a long story of it, and he'll tell you in three words.

Enter O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. 'Save you, my dear; and you, sir, I have a little bit of a word in private for you.

Bel. Pray deliver your commands: this gentleman is my intimate friend.

O'Fla. Why, then, ensign Dudley will be glad to measure swords with you yonder, at the London Tavern, in Bishopsgate-street, at nine o'clock—you know the place.

Bel. I do, and shall observe the appointment.

O'Fla. Will you be of the party, sir? we shall want a fourth hand.

Stock. Savage as the custom is, I close with your proposal; and though I am not fully informed of the occasion of your quarrel, I shall rely on Mr. Belcour's honour for the justice of it, and willingly stake my life in his defence.

O'Fla. Sir, you are a gentleman of honour, and I shall be glad of being better known to you—But, harkye, Belcour, I had like to have forgot part of my errand: there is the money you gave old Dudley: you may tell it over, 'faith: 'tis a receipt in full; now the lad can put you to death with a safe conscience, and when he has done that job for you, let it be a warning how you attempt the sister of a man of honour.

Bel. The sister?

O'Fla. Ay, the sister; 'tis English, is it not? Or Irish; 'tis all one; you understand me, his sister, or Louisa Dudley, that's her name, I think, call her which you will. By St. Patrick, 'tis a foolish piece of business, Belcour, to go about to take away a poor girl's virtue from her, when there are so many to be met with in this town, who have disposed of theirs to your hands.

[*Erit.*

Stock. Why, I am thunderstruck! what is it you have done, and what is the shocking business in which I have engaged? If I understand him right, 'tis the sister of young Dudley you've been attempting: you talked to me of a professed wanton; the girl he speaks of has beauty enough indeed to inflame your desires, but she has honour, innocence, and simplicity, to awe the most licentious passion; if you have done that, Mr. Belcour, I renounce you, I abandon you, I forswear all fellowship or friendship with you for ever.

Bel. Have patience for a moment; we do indeed speak of the same person, but she is not innocent, she is not young Dudley's sister.

Stock. Astonishing! who told you this?

Bel. The woman, where she lodges, the person who put me on the pursuit, and contrived our meetings.

Stock. What woman? What person?

Bel. Fulmer her name is: I warrant you I did not proceed without good grounds.

Stock. Fulmer, Fulmer? Who waits?

Enter a Servant.

Send Mr. Stukely hither directly; [*Exit Servant*] I begin to see my way into this dark transaction. Mr. Belcour, Mr. Belcour, you are no match for the cunning and contrivances of this intriguing town.

Enter STUKELY.

Pr'ythee, Stukely, what is the name of the woman and her husband, who were stopped upon suspicion of selling stolen diamonds at our next-door neighbour's, the jeweller?

Stuke. Fulmer.

Stock. So!

Bel. Can you procure me a sight of those diamonds?

Stuke. They are now in my hand; I was desired to show them to Mr. Stockwell.

Stock. Give them to me—What do I see?—as I live, the very diamonds miss Rasport sent hither, and which I entrusted to you to return.

Bel. Yes, but I betrayed that trust, and gave them Mrs. Fulmer, to present to miss Dudley.

Stock. With a view, no doubt, to bribe her to compliance?

Bel. I own it.

Stock. For shame, for shame;—and 'twas this woman's intelligence you relied upon for miss Dudley's character.

Bel. I thought she knew her;—by heaven, I would have died, sooner than have insulted a woman of virtue, or a man of honour.

Stock. I think you would; but mark the danger of licentious courses; you are betrayed, robbed, abused, and, but for this providential discovery, in a fair way of being sent out of the world, with all your follies on your head.—Dear Stukely, go to my neighbour, tell him, I have an owner for the jewels; and beg him to carry the people under custody to the London Tavern, and wait for me there. [*Exit Stukely*] I see it was a trap laid for you, which you have narrowly escaped: you addressed a woman of honour with all the loose incense of a profane admirer; and you have drawn upon you the resentment of a man of honour, who thinks himself bound to protect her. Well, sir, you must atone for this mistake.

Bel. To the lady, the most penitent submission I can make is justly due; but in the execution of an act of justice, it never shall be said my soul was swayed by the least particle of fear. I have received a challenge from her brother; now, though I would give my fortune, almost my life itself, to purchase her happiness, yet I cannot abate her one scruple of my honour;—I have been branded with the name of villain.

Stock. Ay, sir, you mistook her character, and he mistook yours: error begets error.

Bel. Villain, Mr. Stockwell, is a harsh word.

Stock. It is a harsh word, and should be unsaid.

Bel. Come, come, it shall be unsaid.

Stock. Or else, what follows? Why, the sword is drawn; and to heal the wrongs you have done to the reputation of the sister, you make an honourable amends by murdering the brother.

Bel. Murdering!

Stock. 'Tis thus religion writes and speaks the word; in the vocabulary of modern honour, there is no such term.—But, come, I don't despair of satisfying the one, without alarming the other; that done, I have a discovery to unfold, that you will then, I hope, be fitt'd to receive.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. STOCKWELL'S *House.*

CAPTAIN DUDLEY, LOUISA, and STUKELY.

Dud. And are those wretches, Fulmer and his wife, in safe custody?

Stuke. They are in good hands; I accompanied them to the tavern, where your son was to be, and then went in search of you. You may be sure, Mr. Stockwell will enforce the law against them as far as it will go.

Dud. What mischief might their cursed machinations have produced, but for this timely discovery!

Lou. Still I am terrified; I tremble with apprehension.

Stuke. Mr. Stockwell is with them, madam, and you have nothing to fear; you may expect them every minute;—and see, madam, agreeably to your wish, they are here. [Exit.

Enter CHARLES; afterwards STOCKWELL and O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. O Charles, O brother! how could you serve

me so? how could you tell me you was going to lady Rusport's, and then set out with a design of fighting Mr. Belcour? But where is he; where is your antagonist?

Stock. Captain, I am proud to see you; and you, miss Dudley, do me particular honour. We have been adjusting, sir, a very extraordinary and dangerous mistake, which, I take for granted, my friend Stukely has explained to you.

Dud. He has—I have too good an opinion of Mr. Belcour, to believe he could be guilty of a designed affront to an innocent girl; and I am much too well acquainted with your character, to suppose you could abet him in such design; I have no doubt, therefore, all things will be set to rights in a very few words, when we have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Belcour.

Stock. He has only stepped into the counting-house, and will wait upon you directly. You will not be over strict, madam, in weighing Mr. Belcour's conduct to the minutest scruple;—his manners, passions, and opinions, are not as yet assimilated to this climate; he comes amongst you a new character, an inhabitant of a new world, and both hospitality, as well as pity, recommend him to our indulgence.

Enter BELCOUR; bows to Miss DUDLEY.

Bel. I am happy, and ashamed, to see you;—no man in his senses would offend you; I forfeited mine, and erred against the light of the sun, when I overlooked your virtues; but your beauty was predominant, and hid them from my sight;—I now perceive, I was the dupe of a most improbable report, and humbly entreat your pardon.

Lou. Think no more of it; 'twas a mistake.

Bel. My life has been composed of little else; 'twas founded in mystery, and has continued in error:—I was once given to hope, Mr. Stockwell, that you was to have delivered me from these difficulties; but either I do not deserve your confidence, or I was deceived in my expectations.

Stock. When this lady has confirmed your pardon, I shall hold you deserving of my confidence.

Lou. That was granted the moment it was asked.

Bel. To prove my title to his confidence, honour me so far with yours, as to allow me a few minutes' conversation in private with you. [*She turns to her Father.*]

Dud. By all means, Louisa;—come, Mr. Stockwell, let us go into another room.

Charles. And now, major O'Flaherty, I claim your promise, of a sight of the paper, that is to unravel this conspiracy of my aunt Rusport's. I think I have waited with great patience.

O'Fla. I have been endeavouring to call to mind what it was I overheard; I have got the paper, and will give you the best account I can of the whole transaction. [*Exeunt.*]

Bel. Miss Dudley, I have solicited this audience, to repeat to you my penitence and confusion: How shall I atone? What reparation can I make to you and virtue?

Lou. To me there's nothing due, nor any thing demanded of you but your more favourable opinion for the future, if you should chance to think of me. Upon the part of virtue, I am not empowered to speak; but if hereafter, as you range through life, you should surprise her in the person of some wretched female, poor as myself, and not so well protected, enforce not your advantage, complete not your licentious triumph; but raise her, rescue her from shame and sorrow, and reconcile her to herself again.

Bel. I will, I will; by bearing your idea ever present in my thoughts, virtue shall keep an advocate within me: but tell me, loveliest, when you pardon the offence, can you, all perfect as you are, approve of the offender? As I now cease to view you in that false light I lately did, can you, and in the fulness of your bounty will you, cease also to reflect upon the libertine addresses I have paid you, and look upon me as your reformed, your rational admirer?

Lou. Are sudden reformations apt to last? and how can I be sure the first fair face you meet will not ensnare

affections so unsteady, and that I shall not lose you lightly as I gained you?

Bel. Because though you conquered me by surprise, I have no inclination to rebel; because since the first moment that I saw you, every instant has improved you in my eyes; because by principle as well as passion I am unalterably yours; in short, there are ten thousand causes for my love to you, would to heaven I could plant one in your soft bosom that might move you to return it!

Lou. Nay, Mr. Belcour—

Bel. I know I am not worthy your regard; I know I am tainted with a thousand faults, sick of a thousand follies; but there's a healing virtue in your eye's, that makes recovery certain; I cannot be a villain in your arms.

Lou. That you can never be: whomever you shall honour with your choice, my life upon't, that woman will be happy: it is not from suspicion that I hesitate, it is from honour; 'tis the severity of my condition, it is the world that never will interpret fairly in our case.

Bel. Oh, what am I, and who in this wide world concerns himself for such a nameless, such a friendless thing as I am? I see, miss Dudley, I've not yet obtained your pardon.

Lou. Nay, that you are in full possession of.

Bel. Oh, seal it with your hand, then, loveliest of women; confirm it with your heart: make me honourably happy, and crown your penitent, not with your pardon only, but your love.

Lou. My love!—

Enter O'FLAHERTY; afterwards DUDLEY and CHARLES, with STOCKWELL.

O'Fla. Joy, joy! sing, dance, leap, laugh for joy. Ha' done making love, and fall down on your knees, to every saint in the calendar, for they are all on your side, and honest St. Patrick at the head of them.

Charles. O Louisa, such an event! by the luckiest

chance in life, we have discovered a will of my grandfather's, made in his last illness, by which he cuts off my aunt Rusport with a small annuity, and leaves me heir to his whole estate, with a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds to yourself.

Lou. What is it you tell me? O sir, instruct me to support this unexpected turn of fortune.

[*To her Father.*

Dud. Name not fortune, 'tis the work of Providence; 'tis the justice of heaven that would not suffer innocence to be oppressed, nor your base aunt to prosper in her cruelty and cunning.

[*A Servant whispers Belcour, and he goes out.*

O'Fla. You shall pardon me, captain Dudley, but you must not overlook St. Patrick neither; for, by my soul, if he had not put it into my head to slip behind the screen, I don't see how you would ever have come at the paper there, that master Stockwell is reading.

Dud. True, my good friend, you are the father of this discovery; but how did you contrive to get this will from the lawyer?

O'Fla. By force, my dear; the only way of getting any thing from a lawyer's clutches.

Stock. Well, major, when he brings his action of assault and battery against you, the least Dudley can do is to defend you with the weapons you have put into his hands.

Charles. That I am bound to do; and after the happiness I shall have in sheltering a father's age from the vicissitudes of life, my next delight will be in offering you an asylum in the bosom of your country.

O'Fla. And upon my soul, my dear, 'tis high time I was there, for 'tis now thirty long years since I set foot in my native country, and by the power of St. Patrick I swear I think it's worth all the rest of the world put together.

Dud. Ay, major, much about that time have I been beating the round of service, and 'twere well for us both to give over; we have stood many a tough gale, and abundance of hard blows, but Charles shall lay us

up in a little private, but safe, harbour, where we'll rest from our labours, and peacefully wind up the remainder of our days.

O'Fla. Agreed, and you may take it as a proof of my esteem, young man, that major O'Flaherty accepts a favour at your hands; for, by heaven, I'd sooner starve, than say I thank you, to the man I despise: but I believe you are an honest lad, and I'm glad you've trounc'd the old cat; for, on my conscience, I believe I must otherwise have married her myself, to have let you in for a share of her fortune.

Stock. Hey day, what's become of Belcour?

Lou. One of your servants called him out just now, and seemingly on some earnest occasion.

Stock. I hope, miss Dudley, he has atoned to you as a gentleman ought.

Lou. Mr. Belcour, sir, will always do what a gentleman ought, and in my case I fear only you will think he has done too much.

Stock. What has he done? and what can be too much? Pray heaven, it may be as I wish! *[Aside.*

Dud. Let us hear it, child.

Lou. With confusion for my own unworthiness, I confess he has offered me——

Stock. Himself.

Lou. 'Tis true.

Stock. Then I am happy; all my doubts, my cares, are over, and I may own him for my son.—Why, these are joyful tidings; come, my good friend, assist me in disposing your lovely daughter to accept this returning prodigal; he is no unprincipled, no hardened libertine: his love for you and virtue is the same.

Dud. 'Twere vile ingratitude in me to doubt his merit—What says my child?

O'Fla. Begging your pardon now, 'tis a frivolous sort of a question, that of yours, for you may see plainly enough by the young lady's looks, that she says a great deal, though she speaks never a word.

Charles. Well, sister, I believe the major has fairly interpreted the state of your heart.

Lou. I own it; and what must that heart be, which love, honour, and beneficence, like Mr. Belcour's, can make no impression on?

Stock. I thank you: What happiness has this hour brought to pass!

O'Fla. Why don't we all sit down to supper, then, and make a night on't?

Enter BELCOUR, introducing MISS RUSPORT.

Bel. Mr. Dudley, here is a fair refugee, who properly comes under your protection; she is equipped for Scotland, but your good fortune, which I have related to her, seems inclined to save you both the journey—Nay, madam, never go back! you are amongst friends.

Charles. Charlotte!

Miss R. The same; that fond, officious girl, that haunts you every where: that persecuting spirit——

Charles. Say rather, that protecting angel; such you have been to me.

Miss R. O Charles, you have an honest, but proud heart.

Charles. Nay, chide me not, dear Charlotte.

Bel. Seal up her lips, then; she is an adorable girl; her arms are open to you; and love and happiness are ready to receive you.

Charles. Thus, then, I claim my dear, my destined wife.
[Embracing her.]

Enter LADY RUSPORT.

Lady R. Hey day! mighty fine! wife, truly! mighty well! kissing, embracing—did ever any thing equal this? Why, you shameless hussy!—But I won't condescend to waste a word upon you.—You, sir, you, Mr. Stockwell; you fine, sanctified, fair-dealing man of conscience; is this the principle you trade upon? is this your neighbourly system, to keep a house of reception for runaway daughters, and young beggarly fortune hunters?

O'Fla. Be advised now, and don't put yourself in such a passion; we were all very happy till you came.

Lady R. Stand away, sir; hav'n't I a reason to be in a passion?

O'Fla. Indeed, honey, and you have, if you know all.

Lady R. Come, madam, I have found out your haunts; dispose yourself to return home with me. Young man, let me never see you within my doors again: Mr. Stockwell, I shall report your behaviour, depend on it.

Stock. Hold, madam, I cannot consent to lose miss Rusport's company this evening, and I am persuaded you won't insist upon it; 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt your daughter's happiness in this manner, believe me it is.

Lady R. Her happiness truly! upon my word! and I suppose it's an unmotherly action to interrupt her ruin; for what but ruin must it be to marry a beggar? I think my sister had a proof of that, sir, when she made choice of you.

[*To Captain Dudley.*

Dud. Don't be too lavish of your spirits, lady Rusport.

O'Fla. By my soul, you'll have occasion for a sip of the cordial elixir by-and-by.

Stock. It don't appear to me, madam, that Mr. Dudley can be called a beggar.

Lady R. But it appears to me, Mr. Stockwell; I am apt to think a pair of colours cannot furnish settlement quite sufficient for the heiress of sir Stephen Rusport.

Miss R. But a good estate, in aid of a commission, may do something.

Lady R. A good estate, truly! where should he get a good estate, pray?

Stock. Why, suppose now a worthy old gentleman, on his death-bed, should have taken it in mind to leave him one——

Lady R. Hah! what's that you say?

O'Fla. O ho! you begin to smell a plot, do you?

Stock. Suppose there should be a paper in the world, that runs thus—'I do hereby give and bequeath all my estates, real and personal, to Charles Dudley, son of my late daughter Louisa, &c. &c. &c.'

O'Fla. There's a fine parcel of &c.'s for your ladyship.

Lady R. Why, I am thunderstruck! by what contrivance, what villany, did you get possession of that paper?

Stock. There was no villany, madam, in getting possession of it; the crime was in concealing it, none in bringing it to light.

Lady R. Oh, that cursed lawyer, Varland!

O'Fla. You may say that, 'faith; he is a cursed lawyer; and a cursed piece of work I had to get the paper from him; your ladyship now was to have paid him five thousand pounds for it: I forced him to give it me of his own accord, for nothing at all, at all.

Lady R. Is it you that have done this? am I foiled by your blundering contrivances, after all?

O'Fla. 'Twas a blunder, 'faith, but as natural a one as if I had made it o'purpose.

Charles. Come, let us not oppress the fallen; do right even now, and you shall have no cause to complain.

Lady R. Am I become an object of your pity, then? Insufferable! confusion light amongst you! marry, and be wretched: let me never see you more. [Exit.

Miss R. She is outrageous; I suffer for her, and blush to see her thus exposed.

Charles. Come, Charlotte, don't let this angry woman disturb our happiness: we will save her, in spite of herself; your father's memory shall not be stained by the discredit of his second choice.

Miss R. I trust implicitly to your discretion, and am in all things yours.

Bel. Now, lovely, but obdurate, does not this example soften?

Lou. What can you ask for more? Accept my hand, accept my willing heart.

Bel. O, bliss unutterable! brother, father, friend, and you, the author of this general joy——

O'Fla. Blessing of St. Patrick upon us all! 'tis a night of wonderful and surprising ups and downs: I wish we were all fairly set down to supper, and there was an end on't.

Stock. Hold for a moment! I have yet one word to

interpose—Entitled by my friendship to a voice in your disposal, I have approved your match; there yet remains a father's consent to be obtained.

Bel. Have I a father?

Stock. You have a father; did not I tell you I had a discovery to make?—Compose yourself—you have a father, who observes, who knows, who loves you.

Bel. Keep me no longer in suspense; my heart is softened for the affecting discovery, and nature fits me to receive his blessing.

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. My father!—Do I live?

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. It is too much—my happiness overpowers me—to gain a friend, and find a father, is too much: I blush to think how little I deserve you. [*They embrace.*]

Dud. See, children, how many new relations spring from this night's unforeseen events, to endear us to each other.

O'Fla. O my conscience, I think we shall be all related by-and-by.

Stock. Yes, Belcour, I have watched you with a patient, but inquiring eye, and I have discovered through the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence, and animated nature; fallible indeed, but not incorrigible; and your election of this excellent young lady makes me glory in acknowledging you to be my son.

Bel. I thank you, and in my turn, glory in the father I have gained. Sensibly impressed with gratitude for such extraordinary dispensations, I beseech you, amiable Louisa, for the time to come, whenever you perceive me deviating into error or offence, bring only to my mind the providence of this night, and I will turn to reason and obey.

THE
WONDER;
A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET.

A Comedy.
BY MRS. CENTLIVRE.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY
THOMAS DIBDIN,
OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.
Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,
BY C. WHITTINGHAM;
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1815.



THE WONDER,

ESTEEMED one of Mrs. Centlivre's best productions, was first acted at Drury Lane in 1714, and has ever since been a deserving favourite. It has been asserted that a play by Lord Digby, called **ELVIRA, or, THE WORST NOT ALWAYS TRUE**, furnished a groundwork for **THE WONDER**; but it is most probable that one of the old Spanish romances, which were so much in fashion at the time, gave the original hints to both Lord Digby and Mrs. Centlivre.

Mr. Garrick revived, and added to the celebrity of this comedy, as well as to his own fame, by his unrivalled performance of *Don Felix*.



PROLOGUE.

Our author fears the critics of the stage,
Who, like barbarians, spare nor sex nor age;
She trembles at those censors in the pit,
Who think good nature shows a want of wit:
Such malice, oh! what muse can undergo it?
To save themselves, they always damn the poet.
Our author flies from such a partial jury,
As wary lovers from the nymphs of Drury:
To the few candid judges, for a smile,
She humbly sues, to recompense her toil.
To the bright circle of the fair, she next
Commits her cause, with anxious doubts perplex'd.
Where can she with such hopes of favour kneel,
As to those judges who her frailties feel?
A few mistakes her sex may well excuse;
And such a plea no woman should refuse:
If she succeeds, a woman gains applause;
What female but must favour such a cause?
Her faults—whate'er they are—e'en pass them by,
And only on her beauties fix your eye.
In plays, like vessels floating on the sea,
There's none so wise to know their destiny.
In this, howe'er, the pilot's skill appears,
While by the stars his constant course he steers;
Rightly our author does her judgment show,
That for her safety she relies on you.
Your approbation, fair ones, can't but move
Those stubborn hearts, which first you taught to love:
The men must all applaud this play of ours;
For who dare see with other eyes than yours?

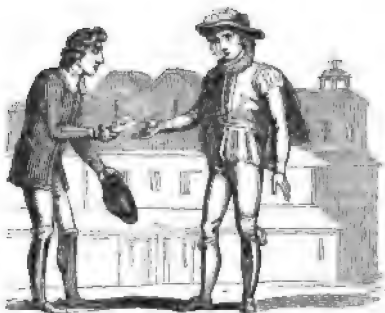
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	<i>Drury Lane, 1815.</i>	<i>Covent Garden, 1814.</i>
<i>Don Lopez</i>	Mr. Penley.	Mr. Murray.
<i>Don Felix</i>	Mr. Rae.	Mr. Young.
<i>Frederic</i>	Mr. Barnard.	Mr. Claremont.
<i>Don Pedro</i>	Mr. Gattie.	Mr. Simmons.
<i>Colonel Briton</i>	Mr. Holland.	Mr. Abbot.
<i>Gibby</i>	Mr. R. Palmer.	Mr. Emery.
<i>Lissardo</i>	Mr. Harley.	Mr. Farley.
<i>Alguazil</i>	Mr. Maddecks.	Mr. Atkins.
<i>Vasquez</i>	Mr. Evans.	Mr. Menage.
<i>Soldier</i>	Mr. Cooke.	
 <i>Donna Violante</i> . .	 Mrs. Glover.	 Mrs. Jordan.
<i>Donna Isabella</i> . .	 Mrs. Orger.	 Miss Bristow.
<i>Flora</i>	 Miss Kelly.	 Mrs. Gibbs.
<i>Inis</i>	 Mrs. Scott.	 Miss Logan.

Attendants, Servants, &c.

SCENE—LISBON.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *A Street.*

Enter DON LOPEZ, meeting FREDERIC.

Fred. **M**y lord, don Lopez.

Lop. How d'ye, Frederio?

Fred. At your lordship's service. I am glad to see you look so well, my lord; I hope Antonio's out of danger?

Lop. Quite the contrary; his fever increases, they tell me; and the surgeons are of opinion his wound is mortal.

Fred. Your son, don Felix, is safe, I hope?

Lop. I hope so too; but they offer large rewards to apprehend him.

Fred. When heard your lordship from him?

Lop. Not since he went. I forbade him writing till the public news gave him an account of Antonio's health. Letters might be intercepted, and the place of his abode discovered; however, if Antonio dies, Felix shall for England. You have been there; what sort of people are the English?

Fred. My lord, the English are by nature, what the ancient Romans were by discipline, courageous, bold, hardy, and in love with liberty. Liberty is the idol of the English, under whose banner all the nation enlist; give but the word for liberty, and straight more armed legions would appear, than France and Philip keep in constant pay.

Lop. I like their principles. Who does not wish for freedom in all degrees of life? though common prudence sometimes makes us act against it, as I am now obliged to do; for I intend to marry my daughter to don Guzman, whom I expect from Holland every day, whither he went to take possession of a large estate left him by his uncle.

Fred. You will not, surely, sacrifice the lovely Isabella, to age, avarice, and a fool? pardon the expression, my lord; but my concern for your beautiful daughter transports me beyond that good manners which I ought to pay your lordship's presence.

Lop. I can't deny the justness of the character, Frederic; but you are not insensible what I have suffered by these wars; and he has two things which render him very agreeable to me for a son-in-law, he is rich, and well-born; as for his being a fool, I don't conceive how that can be any blot in a husband who is already possessed of a good estate.—A poor fool, indeed, is a very scandalous thing; and so are your poor wits in my opinion, who have nothing to be vain of but the inside of their skulls. Now, for don Guzman, I know I can rule him as I think fit; this is acting the politic part, Frederic, without which it is impossible to keep up the port of this life.

Fred. But have you no consideration for your daughter's welfare, my lord?

Lop. Is a husband of twenty thousand crowns a year no consideration? Now I think it a very good consideration.

Fred. One way, my lord. But what will the world say of such a match?

Lop. Sir, I value not the world a button.

Fred. I cannot think your daughter can have any inclination for such a husband.

Lop. There I believe you are pretty much in the right, though it is a secret which I never had the curiosity to inquire into, nor I believe ever shall.—Inclination, quotha! Parents would have a fine time on't if they consulted their children's inclinations! No, no, sir, it is not a father's business to follow his children's inclinations till he makes himself a beggar.

Fred. But this is of another nature, my lord.

Lop. Lookye, sir, I resolve she shall marry don Guzman the moment he arrives; though I could not govern my son, I will my daughter, I assure you.

Fred. This match, my lord, is more preposterous than that which you proposed to your son, from whence arose this fatal quarrel.—Don Antonio's sister, Elvira, wanted beauty only, but Guzman every thing, but—

Lop. Money—and that will purchase every thing; and so adieu. [Exit.]

Fred. Monstrous! These are the resolutions which destroy the comforts of matrimony—he is rich and well-born, powerful arguments indeed! Could I but add them to the friendship of don Felix, what might I not hope? But a merchant and a grandee of Portugal, are inconsistent names—

Enter LISSARDO, in a Riding-habit.

Lissardo! From whence came you?

Lis. That letter will inform you, sir.

Fred. I hope your master's safe?

Lis. I left him so; I have another to deliver which requires haste.—Your most humble servant, sir.

[Bowing.]

Fred. To Violante, I suppose?

Lis. The same.

[Exit.]

Fred. [Reads] Dear Frederic—The two chief blessings of this life are, a friend and a mistress; to be debarred the sight of those is not to live. I hear nothing

of Antonio's death, and therefore resolve to venture to thy house this evening, impatient to see Violante, and embrace my friend. Yours,
 Pray heaven, he comes undiscovered.—Ha! colonel Briton.

Enter COLONEL BRITON, in a Riding-habit.

Col. B. Frederic, I rejoice to see thee.

Fred. What brought you to Lisbon, colonel?

Col. B. La fortune de la guerre, as the French say: I have commanded these three last years in Spain, but my country has thought fit to strike up a peace, and give us good Protestants leave to hope for Christian burial; so I resolved to take Lisbon in my way home.

Fred. If you are not provided of a lodging, colonel, pray command my house while you stay.

Col. B. If I were sure I should not be troublesome, I would accept your offer, Frederic.

Fred. So far from trouble, colonel, I shall take it as a particular favour. What have we here?

Col. B. My footman. This is our country dress, you must know; which, for the honour of Scotland, I make all my servants wear.

Enter GIBBY, in a Highland Dress.

Gibby. What mun I de with the horses, and like yer honour? They will tack cold gin they stand in the causeway.

Fred. Oh, I'll take care of them. What, ho! Vasquez!

Enter VASQUEZ.

Put those horses, which that honest fellow will show you, into my stable, do you hear, and feed them well.

Vas. Yes, sir.—Sir, by my master's orders, I am, sir, your most obsequious, humble servant. Be pleased to lead the way.

Gibby. 'Sbleed, gang yer gate, sir, and I sall follow ye: Ise tee hungry to feed on compliments.

[Exit with Vasquez]

Fred. Ha, ha! a comical fellow.—Well, how do you like our country, colonel?

Col. B. Why faith, Frederic, a man might pass his time agreeably enough withinside of a nunnery; but to behold such troops of soft, plump, tender, melting, wishing, nay, willing girls too, through a damn'd grate, gives us Britons strong temptations to plunder. Ah, Frederic, your priests are wicked rogues; they immure beauty for their own proper use, and show it only to the laity to create desires, and inflame accompts, that they may purchase pardons at a dearer rate.

Fred. I own wenching is something more difficult here than in England, where women's liberties are subservient to their inclinations, and husbands seem of no effect, but to take care of the children which their wives provide.

Col. B. And does restraint get the better of inclination with your women here? No, I'll be sworn not, even in fourscore. Don't I know the constitution of the Spanish ladies?

Fred. And of all the ladies where you come, colonel; you were ever a man of gallantry.

Col. B. Ah, Frederic, the kirk half starves us Scotchmen. We are kept so sharp at home, that we feed like cannibals abroad. Harkye, hast thou never a pretty acquaintance now, that thou wouldst consign over to a friend for half an hour, ha?

Fred. Faith, colonel, I am the worst pimp in Christendom; you had better trust to your own luck; the women will soon find you out, I warrant you.

Col. B. Ay, but it is dangerous foraging in an enemy's country; and since I have some hopes of seeing my own again, I had rather purchase my pleasure, than run the hazard of a stiletto in my guts. Wilt thou recommend me to a wife then; one that is willing to exchange her moidores for English liberty; ha, friend?

Fred. She must be very handsome, I suppose?

Col. B. The handsomer the better—but be sure she has a nose.

Fred. Ay, ay, and some gold.

Col. B. Oh, very much gold; I shall never be able to swallow the matrimonial pill, if it be not well gilded.

Fred. Pho, beauty will make it slide down nimbly.

Col. B. At first, perhaps, it may; but the second or third dose will choke me.—I confess, *Frederic*, women are the prettiest playthings in nature; but gold, substantial gold, gives 'em the air, the mien, the shape, the grace, and beauty of a goddess.

Fred. And has not gold the same divinity in their eyes, colonel?

Col. B. Too often——

None marry now for love; no, that's a jest:

The self-same bargain serves for wife and beast.

Fred. You are always gay, colonel. Come, shall we take a refreshing glass at my house, and consider what has been said?

Col. B. I have two or three compliments to discharge for some friends, and then I shall wait on you with pleasure. Where do you live?

Fred. At yon corner house with the green rails.

Col. B. In the close of the evening I will endeavour to kiss your hand. Adieu.

Fred. I shall expect you with impatience. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A Room in DON LOPEZ's House.*

Enter ISABELLA and INIS her Maid.

Inis. For goodness' sake, madam, where are you going in this pet?

Isa. Any where to avoid matrimony; the thought of a husband is terrible to me.

Inis. Ay, of an old husband; but if you may choose for yourself, I fancy matrimony would be no such frightful thing to you.

Isa. You are pretty much in the right, *Inis*; but to be forced into the arms of an idiot, who has neither person to please the eye, sense to charm the ear, nor generosity to supply those defects. Ah, *Inis*, what pleasant lives women lead in England, where duty

wears no fetter but inclination: The custom of our country enslaves us from our very cradles, first to our parents, next to our husbands; and when heaven is so kind to rid us of both these, our brothers still usurp authority, and expect a blind obedience from us: so that maids, wives, or widows, we are little better than slaves to the tyrant man; therefore, to avoid their power, I resolve to cast myself into a monastery.

Inis. That is, you'll cut your own throat, to avoid another's doing it for you. Ah, madam, those eyes tell me you have no nun's flesh about you! A monastery, quotha! where you'll wish yourself into the green sickness in a month.

Isa. What care I; there will be no man to plague me.

Inis. No, nor what's much worse, to please you neither—Odslife, madam, you are the first woman that e'er despair'd in a Christian country.—Were I in your place——

Isa. Why, what would your wisdom do if you were?

Inis. I'd embark with the first fair wind with all my jewels, and seek my fortune on t'other side the water; no shore can treat you worse than your own; there's never a father in Christendom should make me marry any man against my will.

Isa. I am too great a coward to follow your advice: I must contrive some way to avoid don Guzman, and yet stay in my own country.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. Must you so, mistress; but I shall take care to prevent you. [*Aside*] Isabella, whither are you going, my child?

Isa. To church, sir.

Inis. The old rogue has certainly overheard her. [*Aside*]

Lop. Your devotion must needs be very strong, or your memory very weak, my dear; why, vespers are over for this night. Come, come, you shall have a better errand to church than to say your prayers there. Don Guzman is arrived in the river, and I expect him ashore to-morrow.

Isa. Ha! to-morrow!

Lop. He writes me word, that his estate in Holland is worth twelve thousand crowns a year; which, together with what he had before, will make thee the happiest wife in Lisbon.

Isa. And the most unhappy woman in the world. Oh, sir! if I have any power in your heart, if the tenderness of a father be not quite extinct, hear me with patience.

Lop. No objection against the marriage, and I will hear whatsoever thou hast to say.

Isa. That's torturing me on the rack, and forbidding me to groan; upon my knees I claim the privilege of flesh and blood. [Kneels.]

Lop. I grant it, thou shalt have an arm full of flesh and blood to-morrow. Flesh and blood, quotha! heaven forbid I should deny thee flesh and blood, my girl.

Inis. Here's an old dog for you.

[Aside.]

Isa. Do not mistake, sir; the fatal stroke which separates soul and body, is not more terrible to the thoughts of sinners, than the name of Guzman to my ear.

Lop. Puh, puh; you lie, you lie.

Isa. My frightened heart beats hard against my breast, as if it sought a passage to your feet, to beg you'd change your purpose.

Lop. A very pretty speech this; if it were turned into blank verse, it would serve for a tragedy. Why, thou hast more wit than I thought thou hadst, child. —I fancy this was all extempore; I don't believe thou didst ever think one word on't before.

Inis. Yes, but she has, my lord; for I have heard her say the same things a thousand times.

Lop. How, how? What, do you top your second-hand jests upon your father, huasy, who knows better what's good for you than you do yourself? Remember, 'tis your duty to obey.

Isa. [Rises] I never disobey'd before, and wish I had not reason now; but nature has got the better of my duty, and makes me loathe the harsh commands you lay.

Lop. Ha, ha! very fine! Ha, ha!

Isa. Death itself would be welcome.

Lop. Are you sure of that?

Isa. I am your daughter, my lord, and can boast as strong a resolution as yourself; I'll die before I'll marry Guzman.

Lop. Say you so? I'll try that presently. [*Draws*] Here, let me see with what dexterity you can breathe a vein now. [*Offers her his Sword*] The point is pretty sharp; 'twill do your business, I warrant you.

Inis. Bless me, sir, what do you mean to put a sword into the hands of a desperate woman?

Lop. Desperate! ha, ha, ha! you see how desperate she is. What, art thou frightened, little Bell? ha!

Isa. I confess I am startled at your morals, sir.

Lop. Ay, ay, child, thou hadst better take the man, he'll hurt thee the least of the two.

Isa. I shall take neither, sir; death has many doors, and when I can live no longer with pleasure, I shall find one to let him in at without your aid.

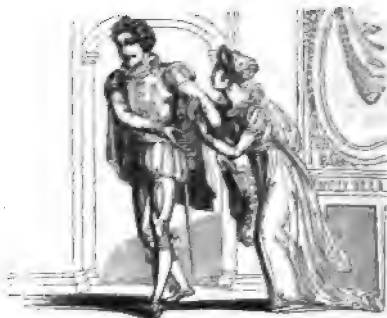
Lop. Say'st thou so, my dear Bell? Ods, I'm afraid thou art a little lunatic, Bell. I must take care of thee, child. [*Takes hold of her, and pulls a Key out of his Pocket*] I shall make bold to secure thee, my dear. I'll see if locks and bars can keep thee till Guzman comes. Go, get into your chamber.

[*Pushes her in, and locks the Door.*

There I'll your boasted resolution try,

And see who'll get the better, you or I. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. A Room in DON PEDRO's House.

Enter VIOLANTE, reading a Letter, and FLORA following.

Flora. What, must that letter be read again?

Vio. Yes, and again, and again, and again, a thousand times again; a letter from a faithful lover can never be read too often: it speaks such kind, such soft, such tender things—
[Kisses it.]

Flora. But always the same language.

Vio. It does not charm the less for that.

Flora. In my opinion nothing charms that does not change; and any composition of the four-and-twenty letters, after the first essay, from the same hand, must be dull, except a bank note, or a bill of exchange.

Vio. Thy taste is my aversion—[Reads] *My all that's charming, since life's not life exiled from thee, this night shall bring me to thy arms. Frederic and thee are all I trust. These six weeks absence have been, in love's accompt, six hundred years. When it is dark, expect the wonted signal at thy window; till when, adieu. Thine, more than his own.*

FELIX.

Flora. Who would not have said as much to a lady of her beauty, and twenty thousand pounds? [*Aside*]
—Were I a man, methinks, I could have said a hundred finer things.

Vio. What would you have said?

Flora. I would have compared your eyes to the stars, your teeth to ivory, your lips to coral, your neck to alabaster, your shape to—

Vio. No more of your bombast; truth is the best eloquence in a lover.—What proof remains ungiven of his love? When his father threaten'd to disinherit him for refusing don Antonio's sister, from whence sprung this unhappy quarrel, did it shake his love for me? And now, though strict inquiry runs through every place, with large rewards to apprehend him, does he not venture all for me?

Flora. But you know, madam, your father, don Pedro, designs you for a nun—to be sure you look very like a nun—and says your grandfather left you your fortune upon that condition.

Vio. Not without my approbation, girl, when I come to one-and-twenty, as I am informed. But, however, I shall run the risk of that. Go, call in Lissardo

Flora. Yes, madam. Now for a thousand verbal questions. [*Aside, and exit.*]

Re-enter FLORA, with LISSARDO.

Vio. Well, and how do you do, Lissardo?

Lis. Ah, very weary, madam—Faith, thou look'st wondrous pretty, Flora. [*Apart to Flora.*]

Vio. How came you?

Lis. En chevalier, madam, upon a hackney jade, which they told me formerly belouged to an English colonel. But I should have rather thought she had been bred a good Roman Catholic all her life-time; for she down'd on her knees to every stock and stone we came along by.—My chops water for a kiss, they do, Flora. [*Apart to Flora.*]

Flora. You'd make one believe you are wondrous fond now. [*Apart to Lissardo.*]

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Lis. Odd, if I had you alone, housewife, I'd show you how fend I could be—— [*Apart to Flora.*]

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Lis. At a little farm-house, madam, about five miles off. He'll be at don Frederic's in the evening——
Odd, I will so revenge myself of those lips of thine. [*Apart to Flora.*]

Vio. Is he in health?

Flora. Oh, you counterfeit wondrous well.

[*Apart to Lissardo.*]

Lis. No, every body knows I counterfeit very ill.

[*Apart to Flora:*]

Vio. How say you? Is Felix ill? What's his distemper? Ha!

Lis. A pica on't, I hate to be interrupted. [*Aside*]——
Love, madam, love——In short, madam, I believe he has thought of nothing but your ladyship ever since he left Lisbon. I am sure he could not, if I may judge of his heart by my own. [*Looks lovingly upon Flora.*]

Vio. How came you so well acquainted with your master's thoughts, Lissardo?

Lis. By an infallible rule, madam, words are the pictures of the mind, you know; now, to prove he thinks of nothing but you, he talks of nothing but you——for example, madam: coming from shooting t'other day, with a brace of partridges, "Lissardo," said he, "go bid the cook roast me these Violantes"——I flew into the kitchen, full of thoughts of thee, and cried, "Here, roast me these Florellas." [*To Flora.*]

Flora. Ha, ha! excellent——You mimic your master then, it seems. [*To Lissardo.*]

Lis. I can do every thing as well as my master, you little rogue [*To Flora*]——Another time, madam, the priest came to make him a visit, he call'd out hastily, "Lissardo," said he, "bring a Violante for my father to sit down on."——Then he often mistook my name, madam, and called me Violante; in short, I heard it so often, that it became as familiar to me as my prayers.

Vio. You live very merrily then, it seems.

Lis. Oh, exceeding merry, madam.

[*Kisses Flora's Hand.*]

Vio. Ha! exceeding merry. Had you treats and balls?

Lis. Oh! yes, yes, madam, several.

Flora. You are mad, Lissardo; you don't mind what my lady says to you.

[*Apart to Lissardo.*]

Vio. Ha! balls——Is he so merry in my absence?

[*Aside*] And did your master dance, Lissardo?

Lis. Dance, madam! where, madam?

Vio. Why, at those balls you speak of.

Lis. Balls! what balls, madam?

Vio. Why, sure you are in love, Lissardo; did not you say, but now, you had balls where you have been?

Lis. Balls, madam! wash-balls, ma'am. Odshife, I ask your pardon, madam! I, I, I had mislaid some wash-balls of my master's, t'other day; and because I could not think where I had laid them just when he asked for them, he very fairly broke my head, madam, and now it seems I can think of nothing else. Alas! he dance, madam! No, no, poor gentleman, he is as melancholy as an unbraced drum.

Vio. Poor Felix! There, wear that ring for your master's sake, and let him know I shall be ready to receive him.

[*Exit.*]

Lis. I shall, madam——[*Puts on the Ring*] Methinks a diamond ring is a vast addition to the little finger of a gentleman.

[*Admires his Hand.*]

Flora. That ring must be mine [Aside]——Well, Lissardo! what haste you make to pay off arrears now. Look how the fellow stands!

Lis. 'Egad, methinks I have a very pretty hand—and very white——and the shape!——Faith, I never minded it so much before!——In my opinion it is a very fine-shaped hand——and becomes a diamond ring as well as the first grandee's in Portugal.

Flora. The man's transported! Is this your love? This your impatience?

Lis. [*Takes Snuff*] Now in my mind——I take snuff with a very jantee air——Well, I am persuaded I want nothing but a coach and a title to make me a very fine gentleman.

[*Struts about.*]

Flora. Sweet Mr. Lissardo, [*Courtesies*] if I may presume to speak to you, without affronting your little finger——

Lis. Odso, madam, I ask your pardon——Is it to me or to the ring——you direct your discourse, madam?

Flora. Madam, good lack! How much a diamond ring improves one!

Lis. Why, though I say it—I can carry myself as well as any body—But what wert thou going to say, child?

Flora. Why, I was going to say, that I fancy you had best let me keep that ring; it will be a very pretty wedding ring, Lissardo; would it not?

Lis. Humph! Ah! But—but—but—I believe I shan't marry yet awhile.

Flora. You shan't, you say?——Very well! I suppose you design that ring for Inis?

Lis. No, no; I never bribe an old acquaintance—Perhaps I might let it sparkle in the eyes of a stranger a little, till we come to a right understanding—but then, like all other mortal things, it would return from whence it came.

Flora. Insolent——Is that your manner of dealing?

Lis. With all but thee——Kiss me, you little rogue you. [*Hugs her.*]

Flora. Little rogue! Pr'ythee, fellow, don't be so familiar; [*Pushes him away*] if I mayn't keep your ring, I can keep my kisses.

Lis. You can, you say? Spoke with the air of a chambermaid.

Flora. Replied with the spirit of a serving-man.

Lis. Pr'ythee, Flora, don't let you and I fall out; I am in a merry humour, and shall certainly fall in somewhere.

Flora. What care I where you fall in.

Re-enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Why do you keep Lissardo so long, Flora, when you don't know how soon my father may awake? His afternoon naps are never long.

Flora. Had don Felix been with her, she would not

have thought the time long. These ladies consider nobody's wants but their own. [*Aside.*]

Vio. Go, go, let him out.

Flora. Yes, madam.

Lis. I fly, madam. [*Exeunt Lissardo and Flora.*]

Vio. The day draws in, and night, the lover's friend, advances—Night, more welcome than the sun to me, because it brings my love.

Flora. [*Within*] Ah, thieves, thieves! murder, murder!

Vio. [*Shrieks*] Ah! defend me, heaven! what do I hear? Felix is certainly pursued, and will be taken.

Re-enter FLORA, running.

How now! Why dost stare so? Answer me quickly; what's the matter?

Flora. Oh, madam! as I was letting out Lissardo, a gentleman rushed between him and I, struck down my candle, and is bringing a dead person in his arms into our house.

Vio. Ha! a dead person! heaven grant it does not prove my Felix.

Flora. Here they are, madam.

Vio. I'll retire, till you discover the meaning of this accident. [*Exit.*]

Enter COLONEL BRITON, with ISABELLA in his Arms, whom he sets down in a Chair, and addresses himself to FLORA.

Col. B. Madam, the necessity this lady was under of being convey'd into some house with speed and secrecy, will, I hope, excuse any indecency I might be guilty of, in pressing so rudely into this—I am an entire stranger to her name and circumstances;—would I were so to her beauty too. [*Aside*] I commit her, madam, to your care, and fly to make her retreat secure; if the street be clear, permit me to return, and learn from her own mouth if I can be further serviceable. Pray, madam, what is the lady of this house called?

Flora. Violante, seignior.

Col. B. Are you she, madam?

Flora. Only her woman, seignior.

Col. B. Your humble servant, mistress. Pray be careful of the lady. [*Gives her two Moidores, and exit.*]

Flora. Two moidores! Well, he is a generous fellow. This is the only way to make one careful.

Re-enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Was you distracted, Flora, to tell my name to a man you never saw? Unthinking wench! Who knows what this may turn to?—What, is the lady dead?—Ah! defend me, heaven! 'tis Isabella, sister to my Folix. What has befallen her? Pray heaven he's safe.—Run and fetch some cold water.—Stay, stay, Flora—Isabella, friend, speak to me—oh, speak to me, or I shall die with apprehension.

Isa. Oh! hold, my dearest father, do not force me; indeed I cannot love him.

Vio. How wild she talks!

Isa. Ha! Where am I?

Vio. With one as sensible of thy pain as thou thyself canst be.

Isa. Violante!—what kind star preserved and lodged me here?

Flora. It was a terrestrial star, called a man, madam; pray Jupiter be proves a lucky one.

Isa. Oh! I remember now. Forgive me, dear Violante; my thoughts ran so much upon the danger I escaped, I forgot.

Vio. May I not know your story?

Isa. Thou art no stranger to one part of it. I have often told thee that my father designed to sacrifice me to don Guzman, who it seems is just returned from Holland, and expected ashore to-morrow, the day that he has set to celebrate our nuptials. Upon my refusing to obey him, he locked me into my chamber, vowing to keep me there till he arrived, and force me to consent. I know my father to be positive, never to be won from his design; and having no hope left me to

escape the marriage, I leap'd from the window into the street.

Vio. You have not hurt yourself, I hope?

Isa. No; a gentleman passing by, by accident, caught me in his arms: at first, my fright made me apprehend it was my father, till he assured me to the contrary.

Flora. He is a very fine gentleman, I promise you, madam; and a well-bred man, I warrant him. I think I never saw a grandee put his hand into his pocket with a better air in my whole life-time; then he open'd his purse with such a grace, that nothing but his manner of presenting me with the gold could equal.

Vio. There is but one common road to the heart of a servant, and 'tis impossible for a generous person to mistake it.—Go leave us, *Flora*. [*Exit Flora*] But how came you hither, *Isabella*?

Isa. I know not; I desired the stranger to convey me to the next monastery; but ere I reached the door, I saw, or fancied that I saw, *Lissardo*, my brother's man; and the thought that his master might not be far off, flung me into a swoon, which is all that I can remember.—Ha! what's here? [*Takes up a Letter*] For *Colonel Briton*. To be left at the post-house in *Lisbon*.—This must be dropp'd by the stranger which brought me hither.

Vio. Thou art fallen into the hands of a soldier; take care he does not lay thee under contribution, girl.

Isa. I find he is a gentleman; and if he is but unmarried, I could be content to follow him all the world over.—But I shall never see him more, I fear.

[*Sighs and pauses.*]

Vio. What makes you sigh, *Isabella*?

Isa. The fear of falling into my father's clutches again.

Vio. Can I be serviceable to you?

Isa. Yes, if you conceal me two or three days.

Vio. You command my house and secrecy.

Isa. I thank you, *Violante*. I wish you would oblige me with *Mrs. Flora* awhile.

Vio. I'll send her to you.—I must watch if dad be still asleep, or here will be no room for *Felix*. [*Exit.*]

Isa. Well, I don't know what ails me; methinks I wish I could find this stranger out.

Re-enter FLORA.

Flora. Does your ladyship want me, madam?

Isa. Ay, Mrs. Flora, I resolve to make you my confidant.

Flora. I shall endeavour to discharge my duty, madam.

Isa. I doubt it not; and desire you to accept this as a token of my gratitude.

Flora. O dear signora, I should have been your humble servant without a fee.

Isa. I believe it. But to the purpose—do you think if you saw the gentleman which brought me hither, you should know him again?

Flora. From a thousand, madam: I have an excellent memory where a handsome man is concerned.—When he went away, he said he would return again immediately. I admire he comes not.

Isa. Here, did you say? You rejoice me—though I'll not see him, if he comes. Could not you contrive to give him a letter?

Flora. With the air of a duenna.

Isa. Not in this house—you must veil and follow him.—He must not know it comes from me.

Flora. What, do you take me for a novice in love affairs? Though I have not practised the art since I have been in donna Violante's service, yet I have not lost the theory of a chambermaid.—Do you write the letter, and leave the rest to me—here, here, here's pen, ink, and paper.

Isa. I'll do it in a minute. [*Sits down to write.*]

Flora. So! this is a business after my own heart: love always takes care to reward his labourers, and Great Britain seems to be his favourite country.—Oh, I long to see the other two maidens with a British air. Methinks there's a grace peculiar to that nation, in making a present.

Isa. So, I have done—now if he does but find this house again!

Flora. If he should not, I warrant I'll find him, if he's in Lisbon; for I have a strong possession that he has two more moidores as good as ever were told.

[Puts the Letter into her Bosom.]

Re-enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Flora, watch my papa; he's fast asleep in his study: if you find him stir, give me notice. *[Felix taps at the Window]* Hark, I hear Felix at the window, admit him instantly, and then to your post. *[Exit Flora.]*

Isa. What say you, Violante? Is my brother come?

Vio. It is his signal at the window.

Isa. *[Kneels]* Oh, Violante! I conjure thee by all the love thou bear'st to Felix, by thy own generous nature, nay more, by that unspotted virtue thou art mistress of, do not discover to my brother I am here!

Vio. Contrary to your desire, be assured I never shall. But where's the danger?

Isa. Art thou born in Lisbon, and ask that question? He'll think his honour blemish'd by my disobedience; and would restore me to my father, or kill me: therefore, dear, dear girl—

Vio. Depend upon my friendship; nothing shall draw the secret from these lips; not even Felix, though at the hazard of his love. I hear him coming; retire into that closet.

Isa. Remember, Violante, upon thy promise my very life depends. *[Exit.]*

Vio. When I betray thee, may I share thy fate!

Enter FELIX

My Felix! my everlasting love! *[Runs into his Arms.]*

Fel. My life! my soul! my Violante!

Vio. What hazards dost thou run for me? Oh, how shall I requite thee?

Fel. If, during this tedious, painful exile, thy thoughts have never wandered from thy Felix, thou hast made me more than satisfaction.

Vio. Can there be room within this heart for any but thyself? No, if the god of love were lost to all the

rest of humankind, thy image would secure him in my breast: I am all truth, all love, all faith, and know no jealous fears.

Fel. My heart's the proper sphere where love resides: could he quit that, he would be no where found; and yet, *Violante*, I'm in doubt.

Vio. Did I ever give thee cause to doubt, my *Felix*?

Fel. True love has many fears, and fear as many eyes as fame; yet sure I think they see no fault in thee.—
[*Colonel Briton taps at the Window*] What's that?

[*Taps again.*

Vio. What? I hear nothing.

[*Again.*

Fel. Ha! What means this signal at your window?

Vio. Somewhat, perhaps, in passing by, might accidentally hit it; it can be nothing else.

Col. B. [Within] Hist, hist! *Donna Violante!* *donna Violante!*

Fel. They use your name by accident too, do they, madam?

Re-enter FLORA.

Flora. There is a gentleman at the window, madam, which I fancy to be the same who brought *Isabella* hither. Shall I admit him? [Aside to *Violante*.

Vio. Admit distraction rather! Thou art the cause of this, unthinking wretch! [Apart.

Fel. What, has Mrs. Scout brought you fresh intelligence? Death, I'll know the bottom of this immediately. [Offers to go.

Flora. Scout! I scorn your words, seignior.

Vio. Nay, nay, nay, you must not leave me.

[Runs and catches hold of him.

Fel. Oh! 'tis not fair not to answer the gentleman, madam. It is none of his fault that his visit proves unseasonable. Pray let me go; my presence is but a restraint upon you. [Struggles to get from her.

Flora. It must be the colonel—now to deliver my letter to him. [Aside, and exit. The Colonel taps louder.

Fel. Hark! he grows impatient at your delay. Why do you hold the man whose absence would oblige you?

Pray let me go, madam. Consider, the gentleman wants you at the window.—Confusion! [Struggles.

Vio. It is not me he wants.

Fel. Death! not you? Is there another of your name in the house?—But come on, convince me of the truth of what you say; open the window. If his business does not lie with you, your conversation may be heard. This, and only this, can take off my suspicion.—What, do you pause? Oh, guilt! guilt! Have I caught you? Nay, then I'll leap the balcony. If I remember, this way leads to it.

[Breaks from her, and goes to the Door where Isabella is.

Vio. Hold, hold, hold, hold! not for the world you enter there!—Which way shall I preserve his sister from his knowledge? [Aside.

Fel. What, have I touch'd you? Do you fear your lover's life?

Vio. I fear for none but you—For goodness' sake, do not speak so loud, my Felix. If my father hears you, I am lost for ever.—Felix! Felix! your curiosity shall be satisfied. [Goes to the Window, and throws up the Sash] Whoe'er you are, that with such insolence dare use my name, and give the neighbourhood pretence to reflect upon my conduct, I charge you instantly to be gone, or expect the treatment you deserve.

Col. B. I ask pardon, madam, and will obey; but when I left this house to-night—

Fel. Good.

Vio. You are mistaken in the house, I suppose, sir.

Fel. No, no, he's not mistaken—Pray, madam, let the gentleman go on.

Vio. Pray be gone, sir, I know of no business you have here.

Col. B. I wish I did not know it neither—But this house contains my soul; then can you blame my body for hovering about it?

Fel. Excellent.

Vio. I tell you again you are mistaken; however, for your own satisfaction, call to-morrow.

Fel. Matchless impudence! an assignation before my face—No, he shall not live to meet your wishes.

[Takes out a Pistol, and goes towards the Window; she catches hold of him.]

Vio. Ah! *[Shrieks]* hold, I conjure you.

Col. B. To-morrow's an age, madam! May I not be admitted to-night?

Vio. If you be a gentleman, I command your absence.
—Unfortunate! what will my stars do with me?

[Aside.]

Col. B. I have done—Only this—Be careful of my life, for it is in your keeping. *[Exit from the Window.]*

Fel. Pray observe the gentleman's request, madam.

[Walks from her.]

Vio. I am all confusion.

Fel. You are all truth, all love, all faith: oh, thou all woman!—How have I been deceived. 'Sdeath, could you not have imposed upon me for this one night? Could neither my faithful love, nor the hazard I have run to see you, make me worthy to be cheated on. Oh, thou—

Vio. Can I bear this from you? *[Weeps.]*

Fel. *[Repeats]* "When I left this house to-night"—
To-night, the devil! return so soon!

Vio. Oh, Isabella! what hast thou involved me in?

[Aside.]

Fel. *[Repeats]* "This house contains my soul." Oh, sweet soul!

Vio. Yet I resolve to keep the secret. *[Aside.]*

Fel. *[Repeats]* "Be careful of my life, for 'tis in your keeping"—Damnation!—How ugly she appears!

[Looks at her.]

Vio. Do not look so sternly on me, but believe me, Felix, I have not injured you, nor am I false.

Fel. Not false, not injured me? Oh, Violante, lost and abandoned to thy vice! Not false! Oh, monstrous!

Vio. Indeed I am not—There is a cause which I must not reveal—Oh, think how far honour can oblige your sex—Then allow a woman may be bound by the same rule to keep a secret.

Fel. Honour! What hast thou to do with honour, thou that canst admit plurality of lovers? A secret! ha, ha, ha! his affairs are wondrous safe, who trusts his secret to a woman's keeping; but you need give yourself no trouble about clearing this point, madam, for you are become so indifferent to me, that your truth and falsehood are the same!

Re-enter FLORA.

Flora. Madam, your father bade me see what noise that was—For goodness' sake, sir, why do you speak so loud?

Fel. I understand my cue, mistress; my absence is necessary, I'll oblige you. [*Going, she takes hold of him.*

Vio. Oh, let me undeceive you first.

Fel. Impossible!

Vio. 'Tis very possible, if I durst.

Fel. Durst! ha, ha, ha! durst, quotha!

Vio. But another time I'll tell thee all.

Fel. Nay, now or never.

Vio. Now it cannot be.

Fel. Then it shall never be.—Thou most ungrateful of thy sex, farewell. [*Breaks from her, and exit.*

Vio. Oh, exquisite trial of my friendship! Yet not even this shall draw the secret from me.

That I'll preserve, let fortune frown or smile;

And trust to love, my love to reconcile. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *A Street.*

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. Was ever man thus plagued! Odsheart! I could swallow my dagger for madness; I know not what to think; sure Frederic had no hand in her escape—She must get out of the window; and she could not do that without a ladder; and who could bring it her but him? Ay, it must be so. This graceless baggage—But I'll to Frederic immediately; I'll take the alguazil with me, and search his house; and if I find her, I'll use her—by St. Anthony, I don't know how I'll use her. [Exit.]

Enter COLONEL BRITON, with ISABELLA's Letter in his Hand; GIBBY following.

Col. B. Well, though I could not see my fair incognita, fortune, to make me amends, has flung another intrigue in my way. Oh! how I love these pretty, kind, coming females, that won't give a man the trouble of racking his invention to deceive them.—This letter I received from a lady in a veil—Some duenna; some

necessary implement of Cupid. I suppose the style is frank and easy, I hope like her that writ it.—[*Reads*] Sir, I have seen your person and like it—very concise—And if you'll meet me at four o'clock in the morning upon the Terriero de Passa, half an hour's conversation will let me into your mind—Ha, ha, ha! a philosophical wench; this is the first time I ever knew a woman had any business with the mind of a man—If your intellects answer your outward appearance, the adventure may not displease you. I expect you'll not attempt to see my face, nor offer any thing unbecoming the gentleman I take you for.—Humph, the gentleman she takes me for! I hope she takes me to be flesh and blood, and then I'm sure I shall do nothing unbecoming a gentleman. Well, if I must not see her face, it shall go hard if I don't know where she lives.—Gibby.

Gibby. Here, and lik yer honour.

Col. B. Follow me at a good distance, do you hear, Gibby?

Gibby. In troth dee I, weel enough, sir.

Col. B. I am to meet a lady on the Terriero de Passa.

Gibby. The deel an mine eyn gin I ken her, sir.

Col. B. But you will when you come there, sirrah.

Gibby. Like enough, sir; I have as sharp an eyn tul a bonny lass as ere a lad in aw Scotland: and what mun I dee wi' her, sir?

Col. B. Why, if she and I part, you must watch her home, and bring me word where she lives.

Gibby. In troth sal I, sir, gin the deel tak her not.

Col. B. Come along then, 'tis pretty near the time—I like a woman that rises early to pursue her inclination.

Thus we improve the pleasures of the day,
While tasteless mortals sleep their time away.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. FREDERIC'S House.

Enter INIS and LISSARDO.

Lis. Your lady run away, and you know not whither, say you?

Inis. She never greatly cared for me after finding you and I together: but you are very grave, methinks, Lissardo.

Lis. [*Looking on the Ring*] Not at all—I have some thoughts indeed of altering my course of living; there is a critical minute in every man's life, which if he can but lay hold of, he may make his fortune.

Inis. Ha! what do I see? a diamond ring! where the deuce had he that ring? [*Aside*] You have got a very pretty ring there, Lissardo.

Lis. Ay, the trifle is pretty enough; but the lady which gave it to me is a bona roba, in beauty, I assure you.

Inis. I can't bear this—The lady! [*Aside*] What lady, pray?

Lis. O fie! There's a question to ask a gentleman.

Inis. A gentleman! Why the fellow's spoil'd! Is this your love for me? Ungrateful man, you'll break my heart, so you will.

[*Bursts into Tears.*]

Lis. Poor tender-hearted fool—

[*Aside.*]

Inis. If I knew who gave you that ring, I'd tear her eyes out, so I would.

[*Sobs.*]

Lis. So, now the jade wants a little coaxing. [*Aside*] Why, what dost weep for now, my dear, ha?

Inis. I suppose Flora gave you that ring; but I'll—

Lis. No, the devil take me if she did; you make me swear now—So, they are all for the ring, but I shall bob 'em. [*Aside*] I did but joke, the ring is none of mine, it is my master's; I am to give it to be new set, that's all; therefore pr'ythee dry thy eyes, and kiss me, come.

Enter FLORA, unobserved.

Inis. And do you really speak truth now?

Lis. Why do you doubt it?

Flora. So, so, very well! I thought there was an intrigue between him and Inis, for all he has forsworn it so often.

[*Aside.*]

Inis. Nor han't you seen Flora, since you came to town?

Flora. Ha! how dares she mention my name? [*Aside.*]

Lis. No, by this kiss, I han't.

[*Kisses her.*]

Flora. Here's a dissembling varlet.

[*Aside.*

Inis. Nor don't you love her at all?

Lis. Love the devil! why did I not always tell thee she was my aversion?

Flora. Did you so, villain?

[*Gives him a box on the Ear.*

Lis. Zounds, she's here! I have made a fine piece of work on't.

[*Aside.*

Inis. What's that for, ha?

[*Goes up to her.*

Flora. I shall tell you by-and-by, Mrs. Frippery, if you don't get about your business.

Inis. Who do you call Frippery, Mrs. Trollop? Pray get about your business, if you go to that; I hope you pretend to no right and title here.

Lis. What the devil do they take me for an acre of land, that they quarrel about right and title to me?

[*Aside.*

Flora. Pray what right have you, mistress, to ask that question?

Inis. No matter for that, I can show a better title to him than you, I believe.

Flora. What, has he given thee nine months earnest for a living title? ha, ha.

Inis. Don't fling your flaunting jests at me, Mrs. Boldface, for I won't take 'em, I assure you.

Lis. So! now I am as great as the famed Alexander. But my dear Statira and Roxana, don't exert yourselves so much about me; now I fancy, if you would agree lovingly together, I might, in a modest way, satisfy both your demands upon me.

Flora. You satisfy! No, sirrah, I am not to be satisfied so soon as you think, perhaps.

Inis. No, nor I neither.—What, do you make no difference between us?

Flora. You pitiful fellow you! What you fancy, I warrant, that I gave myself the trouble of dogging you out of love to your filthy person; but you are mistaken, sirrah—it was to detect your treachery—How often have you sworn to me that you hated Inis, and only carried fair for the good cheer she gave you; but

that you could never like a woman with crooked legs, you said.

Inis. How, how, sirrah, crooked legs! Odds, I could find in my heart—— [*Snatches up her Petticoat a little.*]

Lis. Here's a lying young jade, now! Pr'ythee, my dear, moderate thy passion. [*Coarsely.*]

Inis. I'd have you to know, sirrah, my legs were never—— Your master, I hope, understands legs better than you do, sirrah. [*Passionately.*]

Lis. My master! so, so. [*Shakes his Head and winks.*]

Flora. I am glad I have done some mischief, however. [*Aside.*]

Lis. Art thou really so foolish to mind what an enraged woman says? Don't you see she does it on purpose to part you and I? [*To Inis. Runs to Flora*] Could not you find the joke without putting yourself in a passion? you silly girl you. Why I saw you follow us plain enough, and said all this, that you might not go back with only your labour for your pains—— But you are a revengeful young slut though, I tell you that; but come, kiss and be friends.

Flora. Don't think to coax me; hang your kisses.

Fel. [*Without*] Lissardo.

Lis. Odsheart, here's my master: the devil take both these jades for me, what shall I do with them? [*Aside.*]

Inis. Ha! 'tis don Felix's voice; I would not have him find me here with his footman for the world. [*Aside.*]

Fel. [*Without*] Why, Lissardo, Lissardo!

Lis. Coming, sir. What a pox will you do?

Flora. Bless me, which way shall I get out?

Lis. Nay, nay, you must e'en set your quarrel aside, and be content to be mew'd up in this clothes-press together, or stay where you are, and face it out——there is no help for it.

Flora. Put me any where, rather than that; come, come, let me in. [*He opens the Press, and she goes in.*]

Inis. I'll see her hang'd before I'll go into the place where she is.—I'll trust fortune with my deliverance. Here used to be a pair of back stairs; I'll try to find them out. [*Exit.*]

Enter DON FELIX and FREDERIC.

Fel. Was you asleep, sirrah, that you did not hear me call?

Lis. I did hear you, and answered you I was coming, sir.

Fel. Go, get the horses ready; I'll leave Lisbon to-night, never to see it more.

Lis. Hey-day! what's the matter now? [*Exit.*

Fred. Pray tell me, don Felix, what has ruffled your temper thus?

Fel. A woman—Oh, friend, who can name woman, and forget inconstancy?

Fred. This from a person of mean education were excusable, such low suspicions have their source from vulgar conversation; men of your politer taste never rashly censure—Come, this is some groundless jealousy—Love raises many fears.

Fel. No, no; my ears conveyed the truth into my heart, and reason justifies my anger. Oh, my friend! Violante's false, and I have nothing left but thee, in Lisbon, which can make me wish ever to see it more, except revenge upon my rival, of whom I am ignorant. Oh, that some miracle would reveal him to me, that I might through his heart punish her infidelity!

Re-enter LISSARDO.

Lis. Oh, sir! here's your father, don Lopez, coming up.

Fel. Does he know that I am here?

Lis. I can't tell, sir; he asked for don Frederic.

Fred. Did he see you?

Lis. I believe not, sir; for as soon as I saw him, I ran back to give my master notice.

Fel. Keep out of his sight then. [*Exit Lissardo*]—And, dear Frederic, permit me to retire into the next room, for I know the old gentleman will be very much displeased at my return without his leave. [*Exit.*

Fred. Quick, quick, be gone, he is here.

Enter DON LOPEZ, speaking as he enters.

Lop. Mr. Alguazil, wait you without till I call for

you. Frederic, an affair brings me here—which requires privacy—so that if you have any body within ear-shot, pray order them to retire.

Fred. We are private, my lord, speak freely.

Lop. Why then, sir, I must tell you that you had better have pitched upon any man in Portugal to have injured, than myself.

Fred. I understand you not, my lord.

Lop. Though I am old, I have a son——Alas, why name I him? he knows not the dishonour of my house.

Fred. Explain yourself, my lord; I am not conscious of any dishonourable action to any man, much less to your lordship.

Lop. 'Tis false! you have debauched my daughter.

Fred. My lord, I scorn so foul a charge.

Lop. You have debauched her duty at least, therefore instantly restore her to me, or by St. Anthony I'll make you.

Fred. Restore her, my lord! where shall I find her?

Lop. I have those that will swear she is here in your house.

Fred. You are misinformed, my lord; upon my reputation, I have not seen donna Isabella since the absence of don Felix.

Lop. Then pray, sir—if I am not too inquisitive, what motive had you for those objections you made against her marriage with don Guzman yesterday?

Fred. The disagreeableness of such a match, I fear'd, would give your daughter cause to curse her duty, if she complied with your demands; that was all, my lord.

Lop. And so you helped her through the window, to make her disobey.

Fred. This is insulting me, my lord, when I assure you, I have neither seen nor know any thing of your daughter——If she is gone, the contrivance was her own, and you may thank your rigour for it.

Lop. Very well, sir; however, my rigour shall make bold to search your house. Here, call in the alguazil—

Flora. [*Peeps*] The alguazil! What, in the name of wonder, will become of me?

Fred. The alguazil! My lord, you'll repent this.

Enter Alguazil and Attendants.

Lop. No, sir, 'tis you that will repent it. I charge you, in the king's name, to assist me in finding my daughter.—Be sure you leave no part of the house unsearched. Come, follow me.

[Gets towards the Door where Felix is: Frederic draws, and plants himself before it.]

Fred. Sir, I must first know by what authority you pretend to search my house, before you enter here.

Alg. How, sir, dare you presume to draw your sword upon the representative of majesty? I am, sir, I am his majesty's alguazil, and the very quintessence of authority—therefore put up your sword, or I shall order you to be knock'd down—For know, sir, the breath of an alguazil is as dangerous as the breath of a demi-culverin.

Lop. She is certainly in that room, by his guarding the door—if he disputes your authority, knock him down, I say.

Fred. I shall show you some sport first! The woman you look for is not here; but there is something in this room which I'll preserve from your sight at the hazard of my life.

Lop. Enter, I say; nothing but my daughter can be there—Force his sword from him.

[Felix comes out and joins Frederic.]

Fel. Villains, stand off! assassinate a man in his own house!

Lop. Oh, oh, oh, misericordia! what do I see, my son?

Alg. Ha, his son! Here's five hundred pounds good, my brethren, if Antonio dies; and that's in the surgeon's power, and he's in love with my daughter, you know, so seize him—

Lop. Hold, hold! Oh that ever I was born!

Fred. Did I not tell you you would repent, my lord? What, ho! within there.

Enter VASQUEZ.

Arm yourselves, and let not a man in or out but Felix.
[Exit Vasquez.]

Fel. Generous Frederic!

Fred. Look ye, alguazil; when you would betray my

friend for filthy lucre, I shall no more regard you as an officer of justice; but as a thief and robber thus resist you.

Fel. Come on, sir; we'll show you play for the five hundred pounds.

Re-enter VASQUEZ and Servants.

Lop. Hold, hold, alguazil; I'll give you the five hundred pounds; that is, my bond to pay upon Antonio's death, and twenty pistoles however things go, for you and these honest fellows to drink my health.

Alg. Say you so, my lord? Why, look ye, my lord, I bear the young gentleman no ill will, my lord; if I but get the five hundred pounds, my lord—why, look ye, my lord—"Tis the same thing to me whether your son be hang'd or not, my lord.

Fel. Scoundrels!

[Exeunt Servants.]

Lop. Ay, well, thou art a good-natured fellow, that is the truth on't—Come then, we'll to the tavern, and sign and seal this minute. Oh, Felix! why wouldst thou serve me thus?—But I cannot upbraid thee now, nor have I time to talk. Be careful of thyself, for thou wilt break my heart.

[Exeunt Lopez, Alguazil, and Attendants, followed by Vasquez.]

Fel. Now, Frederic, though I ought to thank you for your care of me, yet till I am satisfied as to my father's accusation, for I overheard it all, I can't return the acknowledgments I owe you. Know you aught relating to my sister?

Fred. I hope my faith and truth are known to you—and here by both I swear, I am ignorant of every thing relating to your father's charge.

Fel. Enough; I do believe thee. Oh, fortune! where will thy malice end?

Re-enter VASQUEZ.

Vas. Sir, I bring you joyful news.

Fel. What's the matter?

Vas. I am told that don Antonio is out of danger, and now in the palace.

Fel. I wish it be true; then I'm at liberty to watch

my rival, and pursue my sister. Pr'ythee, Frederic, inform thyself of the truth of this report.

Fred. I will this minute—Do you hear, let nobody in to don Felix till my return. [*To Vasquez, and exit.*]

Vas. I'll observe, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Flora. [*Peeps*] They have almost frightened me out of my wits—I'm sure—Now Felix is alone, I have a good mind to pretend I came with a message from my lady; but how then shall I say I came into the cupboard?

Re-enter VASQUEZ, who seems to oppose the Entrance of Somebody.

Vas. I tell you, madam, don Felix is not here.

Vio. [*Within*] I tell you, sir, he is here, and I will see him.

Fel. What noise is that?

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. You are as difficult of access, sir, as a first minister of state.

Flora. My stars! my lady here! [*Shuts the Press close.*]

Fel. If your visit was design'd to Frederic, madam, he is abroad.

Vio. No, sir, the visit is to you.

Fel. You are very punctual in your ceremonies, madam.

Vio. Though I did not come to return your visit, but to take that which your civility ought to have brought me.

Fel. If my eyes, my ears, and my understanding lied, then I am in your debt; else not, madam.

Vio. I will not charge them with a term so gross, to say they lied, but call it a mistake; nay, call it any thing to excuse my Felix—Could I, think ye, could I put off my pride so far, poorly to dissemble a passion which I did not feel, or seek a reconciliation with what I did not love?—No law whilst single binds us to obey, but your sex are obliged to pay a deference to all woman kind.

Fel. These are fruitless arguments. 'Tis most certain thou wert dearer to these eyes than all that heaven e'er gave to charm the sense of man; but I would

rather tear them out, than suffer them to delude my reason, and enslave my peace.

Vio. Can you love without esteem? and where is the esteem for her you still suspect? Oh, Felix, there is a delicacy—in love, which equals even a religious faith! True love never doubts the object it adores, and sceptics there will disbelieve their sight.

Fel. Your notions are too refined for mine, madam.

Re-enter VASQUEZ.

How now, sirrah, what do you want?

Vas. Only my master's cloak out of this press, sir; that's all.

Fel. Make haste then.

[Vasquez opens the Press, and sees Flora.]

Vas. Oh! the devil! the devil! *[Exit.]*

Flora. Discover'd! Nay, then logs befriend me.

[Runs out.]

Vio. Ha! a woman conceal'd! Very well, Felix.

Fel. A woman in the press!

Re-enter LISSARDO.

How the devil came a woman there, sirrah?

Lis. What shall I say now? *[Aside.]*

Vio. Now, Lissardo, show your wit to bring your master off.

Lis. Off, madam? Nay, nay, nay, there, there needs no great wit to, to, to bring him off, madam; for she did, and she did not come as, as, as a, a, a man may say directly to, to, to, to speak with my master, madam.

Vio. I see by your stammering, Lissardo, that your invention is at a very low ebb.

Fel. 'Sdeath, rascal! speak without hesitation, and the truth too, or I shall stick my spado in your guts.

Vio. No, no, your master mistakes; he would not have you speak the truth.

Fel. Madam, my sincerity wants no excuse.

Lis. I am so confounded between one and the other that I can't think of a lie. *[Aside.]*

Fel. sirrah, fetch me this woman back instantly; I'll know what business she had here!

Vio. Not a step; your master shall not be put to the blush—Come, a truce, Felix! Do you ask me no more questions about the window, and I'll forgive this.

Fel. I scorn forgiveness where I own no crime; but your soul, conscious of its guilt, would fain lay hold of this occasion to blend your treason with my innocence.

Vio. Insolent! Nay, if instead of owning your fault, you endeavour to insult my patience, I must tell you, sir, you don't behave yourself like that man of honour you would be taken for; you ground your quarrel with me upon your own inconstancy; 'tis plain you are false yourself, and would make me the aggressor.—It was not for nothing the fellow opposed my entrance.—This last usage has given me back my liberty; and now my father's will shall be obeyed without the least reluctance: and so your servant. [*Exit.*]

Fel. Oh, stubborn, stubborn heart, what wilt thou do? Her father's will shall be obeyed; ha! that carries her to a cloister, and cuts off all my hopes at once—By heaven she shall not, must not leave me! No, she is not false, at least my love now represents her true, because I fear to lose her. Ha! villain, art thou here? [*Turns upon Lissardo*] Tell me this moment who this woman was, and for what intent she was here concealed—or—

Lis. Ay, good sir, forgive me, and I'll tell you the whole truth. [*Falls on his Knees.*]

Fel. Out with it then.

Lis. It, it, it, was Mrs. Flora, sir, donna Violante's woman. You must know, sir, we have had a sneaking kindness for one another a great while.—She was not willing you should know it; so, when she heard your voice, she ran into the clothes-press. I would have told you this at first, but I was afraid of her lady's knowing it; this is the truth, as I hope for a whole skin, sir.

Fel. If it be not, I'll not leave you a whole bone in it, sirrah—Fly, and observe if Violante goes directly home.

Lis. Yes, sir, yes.

Fel. Fly, you dog, fly. [*Exit Lissardo*] I must con-

vince her of my faith. Oh! how irrésolute is a lover's heart!—How absolute a woman's power!

It vain we strive their tyranny to quit;

In vain we struggle, for we must submit.

[Exit.

SCENE III. *The Terriero de Passa.*

Enter COLONEL BRITON, and ISABELLA veiled;

GIBBY at a distance.

Col. B. Then you say it is impossible for me to wait upon you home, madam?

Isa. I say, it is inconsistent with my circumstances, colonel, and that way impossible for me to admit of it.

Col. B. Consent to go with me then.—I lodge at one don Frederic's, a merchant, just by here: he is a very honest fellow, and I dare confide in his secrecy.

Isa. Ha! does he lodge there? Pray heaven I am not discovered!

[Aside.

Col. B. What say you, my charmer? shall we breakfast together? I have some of the best tea in the universe.

Isa. Pooh! tea! Is that the best treat you can give a lady at your lodgings, colonel?

Col. B. Well hinted. [Aside] No, no, no, I have other things at thy service, child.

Isa. What are these things, pray?

Col. B. My heart, soul, and body into the bargain.

Isa. Has the last no incumbrance upon it? Can you make a clear title, colonel?

Col. B. All freehold, child; and I'll afford thee a very good bargain.

[Embraces her.

Gibby. O'my sol, they mak muckle words about it. Ise sair weary with standing; Ise e'en take a sleep.

[Aside. Lies down.

Isa. If I take a lease, it must be for life, colonel.

Col. B. Thou shalt have me as long, or as little time as thou wilt, my dear. Come, let's to my lodging, and we'll sign and seal this minute.

Isa. Oh, not so fast, colonel; there are many things to be adjusted before the lawyer and the parson comes.

Col. B. The lawyer and parson! No, no, you little rogue, we can finish our affairs without the help of the law—or the gospel.

Isa. Indeed but we can't, colonel.

Col. B. Indeed! Why, hast thou then trepann'd me out of my warm bed this morning for nothing? Why, this is showing a man, half-famish'd, a well-furnish'd larder, then clapping a padlock on the door, till you starve him quite.

Isa. If you can find in your heart to say grace, colonel, you shall keep the key.

Col. B. I love to see my meat before I give thanks, madam; therefore uncover thy face, child, and I'll tell thee more of my mind. If I like you——

Isa. I dare not risk my reputation upon your ifs, colonel, and so adieu. [Going.]

Col. B. Nay, nay, nay, we must not part.

Isa. As you ever hope to see me more, suspend your curiosity now; one step further loses me for ever.—Show yourself a man of honour, and you shall find me a woman of honour.

Col. B. Well, for once, I'll trust to a blind bargain, madam. [*Kisses her Hand. Exit Isabella*] But I shall be too cunning for your ladyship, if Gibby observes my orders. Methinks these intrigues, which relate to the mind, are very insipid—the conversation of bodies is much more diverting.—Ha! what do I see? my rascal asleep! Sirrah, did not I charge you to watch the lady? And is it thus you observe my orders, you dog?

[*Kicks Gibby all this while; Gibby shrugs, rubs his Eyes, and yawns.*]

Gibby. That's true, an like yer honour; but I thought that when yence you had her in yer ane honds, ye might a ordered her yer sel well enough without me, en ye ken, an like yer honour.

Col. B. Sirrah, hold your impertinent tongue, and make haste after her. If you don't bring me some account of her, never dare to see my face again. [*Exit.*]

Gibby. Ay, this is bony wark indeed! to run three hundred mile to this wicked town, and before I can well fill my weam, to be sent a whore-hunting after this black she devil!—What gate sal I gang to speer for this wutch now? Ah, for a ruling elder—or the kirk's treasurer—or his mon—I'd gar my master mak twa o'this.

—But I am sure there's na sick honest people here, or there wud na be sa mickle sculdadrie.

Enter a Soldier, passing along.

Geud mon, did ye see a woman, a lady, ony gate here awa e'en now?

Sol. Yes, a great many. What kind of a woman is it you inquire after?

Gibby. Geud troth, she's na kenspekle; she's aw in a cloud.

Sol. What, 'tis some Highland monster, which you brought over with you, I suppose. I see no such, not I. Kenspekle, quotha!

Gibby. Huly, huly, mon; the deel pike out yer een, and then ye'll see the bater, ye Portuguese tike.

Sol. What says the fellow? [*Turns to Gibby.*

Gibby. Say? I say I am a better fellow than e'er stude upon yer shanks—and gin I heer mair o'yer din, deel o'my saul, sir, but Ise crack yer croon.

Sol. Get you gone, you Scotch rascal, and thank your heathen dialect, which I don't understand, that you han't your bones broke.

Gibby. Ay, an ye dinna understand a Scotsman's tongue, Ise see gin ye can understand a Scotsman's gripe. Wha's the better mon now, sir?

[*Lays hold of him, strikes up his Heels, and gets astride over him.*

Enter VIOLANTE, who crosses the Stage; GIBBY jumps from the Soldier, and brushes up to her.

I vow, madam, but I am glad that ye and I are fore-gather'd. [*Exit Soldier.*

Vio. What would the fellow have?

Gibby. Nothing away, madam, wo worth yer heart, what a muckle deal o'mischief had you like to bring upon poor Gibby!

Vio. The man's drunk.

Gibby. In troth am I not.—And gin I had no found ye, madam, the Laird knows when I should; for my maister bad me ne'er gang hame without tidings of ye, madam.

Vio. Sirrah, get about your business, or I'll have your bones drubb'd.

Gibby. Geud faith, my maister has e'en done that t'yer honds, madam.

Vio. Who is your master, sir?

Gibby. Mony a ane speers the gate they ken right weel. It is no sa lang sen ye parted wi' him. I wish he ken ye hafe as weel as ye ken him.

Vio. Poh, the creature's mad, or mistakes me for somebody else; and I should be as mad as he, to talk to him any longer. *[Enters Don Pedro's House.]*

Enter LISSARDO, at the upper end of the Stage.

Lis. So, she's gone home I see. What did that Scotch fellow want with her? I'll try to find it out; perhaps I may discover something that may make my master friends with me again.

Gibby. Are ye gone, madam? A deel scope in yer company; for I'm as weese as I was. But I'll bide and see wha's house it is, gin I can meet with ony civil body to speer at. *[Turns and sees Lissardo]* My lad, wot ye wha lives here?

Lis. Don Pedro de Mendosa.

Gibby. And did you see a lady gang in but now?

Lis. Yes, I did.

Gibby. And d'ye ken her tee?

Lis. It was donna Violante, his daughter.—What the devil makes him so inquisitive? Here is something it it, that's certain. *[Aside]*—'Tis a cold morning, brother; what think you of a dram?

Gibby. In troth, very weel, sir.

Lis. You seem an honest fellow; pr'ythee, let's drink to our better acquaintance.

Gibby. Wi aw my heart, sir, gang your gate to the next house, and Ise follow ye.

Lis. Come along then.

[Exit.]

Gibby. Don Pedro de Mendosa—Donna Violante, his daughter—That's as right as my leg, now—Ise need na mare; I'll tak a drink, and then to my maister.

Ise bring him news will mak his heart full blec;

Gin he rewards it not, deel pimp for me.

[Exit.]

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. VIOLANTE'S Lodgings.

Enter ISABELLA, in a gay temper, and VIOLANTE out of humour.

Isa. My dear, I have been seeking you this half hour, to tell you the most lucky adventure.

Vio. And you have pitched upon the most unlucky hour for it, that you could possibly have found in the whole four-and-twenty.

Isa. Hang unlucky hours, I won't think of them; I hope all my misfortunes are past.

Vio. And mine all to come.

Isa. I have seen the man I like.

Vio. And I have seen the man that I could wish to hate.

Isa. And you must assist me in discovering whether he can like me or not.

Vio. You have assisted me in such a discovery already, I thank ye.

Isa. What say you, my dear?

Vio. I say I am very unlucky at discoveries, Isabella; I have too lately made one pernicious to my ease; your brother is false.

Isa. Impossible!

Vio. Most true.

Isa. Some villain has traduced him to you.

Vio. No, Isabella, I love too well to trust the eyes of others; I never credit the ill-judging world, or form suspicions upon vulgar censures; no, I had ocular proof of his ingratitude.

Isa. Then I am most unhappy. My brother was the only pledge of faith betwixt us; if he has forfeited your favour, I have no title to your friendship.

Vio. You wrong my friendship, Isabella; your own merit entitles you to every thing within my power.

Isa. Generous maid—But may I not know what grounds you have to think my brother false?

Vio. Another time—But tell me, Isabella, how can I serve you?

Isa. Thus, then—The gentleman that brought me hither, I have seen and talked with upon the Terrero de Passa this morning, and I find him a man of sense, generosity, and good humour; in short, he is every thing that I could like for a husband, and I have dispatched Mrs. Flora to bring him hither; I hope you'll forgive the liberty I have taken.

Vio. Hither! to what purpose?

Isa. To the great universal purpose, matrimony.

Vio. Matrimony! Why, do you design to ask him?

Isa. No, Violante, you must do that for me.

Vio. I thank you for the favour you design me, but desire to be excused: I manage my own affairs too ill, to be trusted with those of other people; I can't, for my life, admire your conduct, to encourage a person altogether unknown to you.—'Twas very imprudent to meet him this morning, but much more so to send for him hither, knowing what inconveniency you have already drawn upon me.

Isa. I am not insensible how far my misfortunes

have embarrassed you; and, if you please, will sacrifice my quiet to your own.

Vio. Unkindly urged!—Have I not prefer'd your happiness to every thing that's dear to me?

Isa. I know thou hast—Then do not deny me this last request, when a few hours perhaps may render my condition able to clear thy fame, and bring my brother to thy feet for pardon.

Vio. I wish you don't repent of this intrigue. I suppose he knows you are the same woman that he brought in here last night?

Isa. Not a syllable of that; I met him veil'd, and to prevent his knowing the house, I order'd Mrs. Flora to bring him by the back-door into the garden.

Vio. The very way which Felix comes; if they should meet, there would be fine work—Indeed, my dear, I can't approve of your design.

Enter FLORA.

Flora. Madam, the colonel waits your pleasure.

Vio. How durst you go upon such a message, mistress, without acquainting me?

Flora. So, I am to be huff'd for every thing.

Isa. 'Tis too late to dispute that now, dear Violante; I acknowledge the rashness of the action—But consider the necessity of my deliverance.

Vio. That indeed is a weighty consideration: well, what am I to do?

Isa. In the next room I'll give you instructions—In the mean time, Mrs. Flora, show the colonel into this.

[*Exit Flora one way, Isabella and Violante another.*]

Re-enter FLORA, with COLONEL BRITON.

Flora. The lady will wait on you presently, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Col. B. Very well—This is a very fruitful soil. I have not been here quite four-and-twenty hours, and I have three intrigues upon my hands already; but I hate the chase without partaking of the game.

Re-enter VIOLANTE, veiled.

Ha! a fine-sized woman—Pray heaven she proves handsome. [*Aside*]—I am come to obey your ladyship's commands.

Vio. Are you sure of that, colonel?

Col. B. If you be not very unreasonable, indeed, madam. A man is but a man.

[*Takes her Hand, and kisses it.*

Vio. Nay, we have no time for compliments, colonel.

Col. B. I understand you, madam—Montrez moi votre chambre. [*Takes her in his Arms.*

Vio. Nay, nay, hold, colonel, my bed-chamber is not to be enter'd without a certain purchase.

Col. B. Purchase! Humph, this is some kept mistress, I suppose, who industriously lets out her leisure hours. [*Aside*]—Look you, madam, you must consider we soldiers are not overstocked with money—But we make ample satisfaction in love; we have a world of courage upon our hands now, you know—Then, pr'ythee, use a conscience, and I'll try if my pocket can come up to your price.

Vio. Nay, don't give yourself the trouble of drawing your purse, colonel; my design is levell'd at your person, if that be at your own disposal.

Col. B. Ay, that it is, faith, madam, and I'll settle it as firmly upon thee—

Vio. As law can do it.

Col. B. Hang law in love affairs; thou shalt have right and title to it out of pure inclination.—A matrimonial hint again? [*Aside.*

Vio. Then you have an aversion to matrimony, colonel. Did you never see a woman, in all your travels, that you could like for a wife?

Col. B. A very odd question. [*Aside*]—Do you really expect that I should speak truth, now?

Vio. I do, if you expect to be dealt with, colonel.

Col. B. Why, then—Yes.

Vio. Is she in your country, or this?

Col. B. This is a very pretty kind of a catechism.
[*Aside*].—In this town, I believe, madam.

Vio. Her name is——

Col. B. Ay, how is she call'd, madam?

Vio. Nay, I ask you that, sir.

Col. B. Oh, oh, why she is call'd—Pray, madam, how is it you spell your name?

Vio. Oh, colonel, I am not the happy woman, nor do I wish it.

Col. B. No; I'm sorry for that.—What the devil does she mean by all these questions? [*Aside.*

Vio. Come, colonel, for once be sincere—Perhaps you may not repent it.

Col. B. This is like to be but a silly adventure, here's so much sincerity required. [*Aside*].—Faith, madam, I have an inclination to sincerity, but I'm afraid you'll call my manners in question.

Vio. Not at all; I prefer truth before compliment, in this affair.

Col. B. Why then, to be plain with you, madam, a lady last night wounded my heart by a fall from a window, whose person I could be content to take, as my father took my mother, till death do us part.—But whom she is, or how distinguished, whether maid, wife, or widow, I can't inform you. Perhaps you are she.

Vio. Not to keep you in suspense, I am not she, but I can give you an account of her. That lady is a maid of condition, has ten thousand pounds, and if you are a single man, her person and fortune are at your service.

Col. B. I accept the offer with the highest transports; but say, my charming angel, art thou not she?

[*Offers to embrace her.*

Vio. Once again, colonel, I tell you I am not she—But at six this evening you shall find her on the Terrero de Passa, with a white handkerchief in her hand. Get a priest ready, and you know the rest.

Col. B. I shall infallibly observe your directions, madam.

Re-enter FLORA, hastily, and whispers VIOLANTE, who starts and seems surprised.

Vio. Ha! Felix crossing the garden, say you? what shall I do now?

Col. B. You seem surprised, madam.

Vio. Oh, colonel, my father is coming hither, and if he finds you here I am ruin'd.

Col. B. Odsife, madam, thrust me any where. Can't I go out this way?

Vio. No, no, no, he comes that way. How shall I prevent their meeting? Here, here, step into my bed-chamber——

Col. B. Oh, the best place in the world, madam.

Vio. And be still, as you value her you love. Don't stir till you've notice, as ever you hope to have her in your arms.

Col. B. On that condition, I'll not breathe. [*Exit.*

Enter FELIX.

Fel. I wonder where this dog of a servant is all this while——But she is at home, I find——How coldly she regards me. [*Aside*']——You look, Violante, as if the sight of me were troublesome to you.

Vio. Can I do otherwise, when you have the assurance to approach me, after what I saw to-day?

Fel. Assurance! rather call it good nature, after what I heard last night. But such regard to honour have I in my love to you, I cannot bear to be suspected, nor suffer you to entertain false notions of my truth, without endeavouring to convince you of my innocence; so much good nature have I more than you, Violante.——Pray give me leave to ask your woman one question; my man assures me she was the person you saw at my lodgings.

Flora. I confess it, madam, and ask your pardon.

Vio. Impudent baggage, not to undeceive me sooner; what business could you have there?

Fel. Lissardo and she, it seems, imitate you and I.

Flora. I love to follow the example of my betters, madam.

Fel. I hope I am justified——

Vio. Since we are to part, Felix, there needs no justification.

Fel. Methinks you talk of parting as a thing indifferent to you. Can you forget how I have loved?

Vio. I wish I could forget my own passion, I should with less concern remember yours——But, for Mrs. Flora——

Fel. You must forgive her——Must, did I say? I fear I have no power to impose, though the injury was done to me.

Vio. 'Tis harder to pardon an injury done to what we love than to ourselves; but at your request, Felix, I do forgive her. Go watch my father, Flora, lest he should awake and surprise us.

Flora. Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*

Fel. Dost thou then love me, Violante?

Vio. What need of repetition from my tongue, when every look confesses what you ask?

Fel. Oh, let no man judge of love but those who feel it; what wondrous magic lies in one kind look—One tender word destroys a lover's rage, and melts his fiercest passion into soft complaint. Oh, the window, Violante; wouldst thou but clear that one suspicion!

Vio. Pr'ythee, no more of that, my Felix, a little time shall bring thee perfect satisfaction.

Fel. Well, Violante, on condition you think no more of a monastery, I'll wait with patience for this mighty secret.

Vio. Ah, Felix, love generally gets the better of religion in us women. Resolutions made in the heat of passion ever dissolve upon reconciliation.

Re-enter FLORA, hastily.

Flora. Oh, madam, madam, madam, my lord your father has been in the house, and locked the back door, and comes muttering to himself this way.

Vio. Then we are caught. Now, Felix, we are undone.

Fel. Heavens forbid! This is most unlucky! Let me

step into your bed-chamber, he won't look under the bed; there I may conceal myself.

[Runs to the Door, and pushes it open a little.

Vio. No, no, Felix, that's no safe place; my father often goes thither; and should you cough, or sneeze, we are lost.

Fel. Either my eye deceived me, or I saw a man within. I'll watch him close. [Aside.

Flora. Oh, invention, invention! I have it, madam. Here, here, sir: off with your sword, and I'll fetch you a disguise. [Exit.

Fel. She shall deal with the devil, if she conveys him out without my knowledge. [Aside.

Vio. Bless me, how I tremble!

Re-enter FLORA, with a Riding-hood.

Flora. Here, sir, put on this. Be sure you don't speak a word.

Fel. Not for the Indies. [Puts on the Hood.

Ped. [Within] Why, how came the garden-door open?

Enter DON PEDRO.

Ha! how now! Who have we here?

Flora. 'Tis my mother, and please you, sir.

[She and Felix courtesies.

Ped. Your mother! By St. Andrew she's a strapper; why you are a dwarf to her.—How many children have you, good woman?

Vio. Oh! if he speaks we are lost. [Aside.

Flora. Oh! dear seignior, she cannot hear you; she has been deaf these twenty years.

Ped. Alas, poor woman!—Why, you muffle her up as if she was blind too; turn up her hood.

Vio. Undone for ever!—St. Anthony forbid. [Aside] Oh, sir, she has the dreadfulest unlucky eyes—Pray don't look upon them; I made her hood shut on purpose—Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Ped. Eyes! Why, what's the matter with her eyes?

Flora. My poor mother, sir, is much afflicted with the colic; and about two months ago she had it griev-

ously in her stomach, and was over-persuaded to take a dram of filthy English Geneva—which immediately flew up into her head, and caused such a defluxion in her eyes, that she could never since bear the day-light.

Ped. Say you so? Poor woman!—Well, make her sit down, Violante, and give her a glass of wine.

Vio. Let her daughter give her a glass below, sir; for my part, she has frightened me so, I shan't be myself these two hours. I am sure her eyes are evil eyes.

Ped. Well, well, do so—Evil eyes! there are no evil eyes, child.

Flora. Come along, mother.

[*Speaks loud.*]

Ped. Good by, good woman.

[*Exeunt Felix and Flora.*]

Vio. I'm glad he's gone.

[*Aside.*]

Ped. Hast thou heard the news, Violante?

Vio. What news, sir?

Ped. Why, Vasquez tells me, that don Lopez's daughter, Isabella, is run away from her father; that lord has very ill fortune with his children.—Well, I'm glad my daughter has no inclination to mankind, that my house is plagued with no suitors. [*Aside.*]

Vio. This is the first word ever I heard of it: I pity her frailty.—

Ped. Well said, Violante.—Next week I intend thy happiness shall begin.

Re-enter FLORA.

Vio. I don't intend to stay so long, thank you, papa.

[*Aside.*]

Ped. My lady abbess writes word she longs to see thee, and has provided every thing in order for thy reception. Thou wilt lead a happy life, my girl—fifty times before that of matrimony, where an extravagant coxcomb might make a beggar of thee, or an ill-natured surly dog break thy heart.

Flora. Break her heart! She had as good have her bones broke as to be a nun; I am sure I had rather, of the two. [*Aside*] You are wondrous kind, sir; but if I had such a father, I know what I would do.

Ped. Why, what would you do, minx, ha?

Flora. I would tell him I had as good a right and title to the law of nature, and the end of the creation, as he had.

Ped. You would, mistress! who the devil doubts it? A good assurance is a chambermaid's coat of arms; and lying and contriving the supporters.—Your inclinations are on tip-toe, it seems—If I were your father, housewife, I'd have a penance enjoin'd you, so strict, that you should not be able to turn in your bed for a month—You are enough to spoil your lady, housewife, if she had not abundance of devotion.

Vio. Fie, Flora, are you not ashamed to talk thus to my father? You said yesterday you would be glad to go with me into the monastery.

Flora. Did I? I told a great lie then.

Ped. She go with thee! No, no; she's enough to debauch the whole convent.—Well, child, remember what I said to thee: next week—

Vio. Ay, and what I am to do this, too. [*Aside*]—I am all obedience, sir; I care not how soon I change my condition.

Ped. Well said, Violante.—Well, child, I am going into the country for two or three days, to settle some affairs with thy uncle; and when I return, we'll provide for thy happiness, child—Good by, Violante; take care of thyself. [*Exeunt Don Pedro and Violante.*]

Flora. So, now for the colonel, Hist, hist, colonel.

Re-enter COLONEL BRITON.

Col. B. Is the coast clear?

Flora. Yes, if you can climb; for you must get over the wash-house, and jump from the garden-wall into the street.

Col. B. Nay, nay, I don't value my neck, if my incognita answers but thy lady's promise.

[*Exeunt Colonel Briton and Flora.*]

Re-enter FELIX.

Fel. I have lain perdue under the stairs, till I watched the old man out. [*Violante opens the Door*] 'Sdeath, I am prevented.

[*Exit.*]

Re-enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Now to set my prisoner at liberty. [*Goes to the Door where the Colonel is hid*] Sir, sir, you may appear.

Re-enter FELIX, following her.

Fel. May he so, madam? I had cause for my suspicion, I find. Treacherous woman!

Vio. Ha, Felix here! Nay, then all's discover'd.

[*Aside.*

Fel. [*Draws*] Villain, whoever thou art, come out, I charge thee, and take the reward of thy adulterous errand.

Vio. What shall I say?—Nothing but the secret which I have sworn to keep can reconcile this quarrel.

[*Aside.*

Fel. A coward! Nay, then I'll fetch you out. Think not to hide thyself; no, by St. Anthony, an altar should not protect thee.

[*Exit.*

Vio. Defend me, heaven! What shall I do? I must discover Isabella, or here will be murder.

[*Aside.*

Re-enter FLORA..

Flora. I have help'd the colonel off clear, madam.

Vio. Say'st thou so, my girl? Then I am arm'd.

Re-enter FELIX.

Fel. Where has the devil, in compliance to your sex, convey'd him from my resentment?

Vio. Him! whom do you mean, my dear, inquisitive spark? Ha, ha, ha, ha, you will never leave these jealous whims.

Fel. Will you never cease to impose upon me?

Vio. You impose upon yourself, my dear. Do you think I did not see you? Yes, I did, and resolved to put this trick upon you.

Fel. Trick!

Vio. Yes, trick. I knew you'd take the hint, and soon relapse into your wonted error. How easily your jealousy is fired! I shall have a blessed life with you.

Fel. Was there nothing in it then, but only to try me?

Vio. Won't you believe your eyes?

Fel. My eyes! no, nor my ears, nor any of my senses, for they have all deceived me. Well, I am convinced that faith is as necessary in love as in religion; for the moment a man lets a woman know her conquest, he resigns his senses, and sees nothing but what she'd have him.

Vio. And as soon as that man finds his love return'd, she becomes as errant a slave as if she had already said after the priest.

Fel. The priest, *Violante*, would dissipate those fears which cause these quarrels; when wilt thou make me happy?

Vio. To-morrow I will tell thee; my father is gone for two or three days to my uncle's, we have time enough to finish our affairs.—But pr'ythee leave me now, lest some accident should bring my father.

Fel. To-morrow then——

Fly swift ye hours, and bring to-morrow on——
But must I leave you now, my *Violante*?

Vio. You must, my *Felix*. We soon shall meet to part no more.

Fel. Oh, rapt'rous sounds! Charming woman!
Thy words and looks have fill'd my heart
With joy, and left no room for jealousy.
Do thou like me each doubt and fear remove,
And all to come be confidence and love. [Exeunt.

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. FREDERIC'S House.

Enter FELIX and FREDERIC.

Fel. This hour has been propitious; I am reconciled to Violante, and you assure me Antonio is out of danger.

Fred. Your satisfaction is doubly mine.

Enter LISSARDO.

Fel. What haste you made, sirrah, to bring me word if Violante went home.

Lis. I can give you very good reasons for my stay, sir.—Yes, sir, she went home.

Fred. Oh! your master knows that, for he has been there himself, Lissardo.

Lis. Sir, may I beg the favour of your ear?

Fel. What have you to say?

[Whispers, and Felix seems uneasy.]

Fred. Ha! Felix changes colour at Lissardo's news. What can it be?

Fel. A Scotch footman, that belongs to colonel Briton, an acquaintance of Frederic's, say you? The devil!—If she be false, by heaven I'll trace her.—*[Aside]* Pr'ythee, Frederic, do you know one colonel Briton, a Scotchman?

Fred. Yes. Why do you ask me?

Fel. Nay, no great matter : but my man tells me that he has had some little differences with a servant of his, that's all.

Fred. He is a good, harmless, innocent fellow ; I am sorry for it. The colonel lodges in my house ; I knew him formerly in England, and met him here by accident last night, and gave him an invitation home. He is a gentleman of good estate, besides his commission ; of excellent principles, and strict honour, I assure you.

Fel. Is he a man of intrigue?

Fred. Like other men, I suppose. Here he comes.

Enter COLONEL BRITON.

Colonel, I began to think I had lost you.

Col. B. And not without some reason, if you knew all.

Fel. There's no danger of a fine gentleman's being lost in this town, sir.

Col. B. That compliment don't belong to me, sir—but I assure you I have been very near being run away with.

Fred. Who attempted it?

Col. B. Faith, I know not—only that she is a charming woman ; I mean as much as I saw of her.

Fel. My heart swells with apprehension. [*Aside*] Some accidental rencounter?

Fred. A tavern, I suppose, adjusted the matter.

Col. B. A tavern? No, no, sir, she is above that rank, I assure you ; this nymph sleeps in a velvet bed, and lodgings every way agreeable.

Fel. Ha! a velvet bed! [*Aside*] I thought you said but now, sir, you knew her not.

Col. B. No more I don't, sir.

Fel. How came you then so well acquainted with her bed?

Fred. Ay, ay, come, come, unfold.

Col. B. Why then you must know, gentlemen, that I was conveyed to her lodgings, by one of Cupid's emissaries, called a chambermaid, in a chair, through fifty blind alleys, who by the help of a key let me into a garden.

Fel. 'Sdeath, a garden! This must be Violante's garden. [*Aside.*

Col. B. From thence conducted me into a spacious room, told me her lady would wait on me presently; so, without unveiling, modestly withdrew.

Fel. Damn her modesty! this was Flora. [*Aside.*

Fred. Well, how then, colonel?

Col. B. Then, sir, immediately from another door issued forth a lady, arm'd at both eyes, from whence such showers of darts fell around me, that had I not been cover'd with the shield of another beauty, I had infallibly fallen a martyr to her charms: for you must know I just saw her eyes—eyes, did I say? No, no, hold, I saw but one eye, though I suppose it had a fellow equally as killing.

Fel. But how came you to see her bed, sir?—'Sdeath, this expectation gives a thousand racks. [*Aside.*

Col. B. Why, upon her maid's giving notice her father was coming, she thrust me into the bed-chamber.

Fel. Upon her father's coming?

Col. B. Ay, so she said; but putting my ear to the key-hole of the door, I found it was another lover.

Fel. Confound the jilt! 'Twas she, without dispute.

[*Aside.*

Fred. Ah, poor colonel! ha, ha, ha!

Col. B. I discover'd they had had a quarrel, but whether they were reconciled or not, I can't tell; for the second alarm brought the father in good earnest, and had like to have made the gentleman and I acquainted; but she found some other stratagem to convey him out.

Fel. Contagion seize her, and make her body ugly as her soul! There is nothing left to doubt of now.—'Tis plain 'twas she.—Sure he knows me, and takes this method to insult me. 'Sdeath, I cannot bear it!

[*Aside.*

Fred. So when she had dispatch'd her old lover, she paid you a visit in her bed-chamber, ha, colonel?

Col. B. No, plague take the impertinent puppy, he spoil'd my diversion, I saw her no more.

Fel. Very fine! Give me patience, heaven, or I shall burst with rage.

[*Aside.*

Fred. That was hard.

Col. B. Nay, what was worse—But, sir, dear sir, do hearken to this. [*To Felix*] The nymph that introduced me, convey'd me out again over the top of a high wall, where I ran the danger of having my neck broke, for the father, it seems, had locked the door by which I entered.

Fel. That way I miss'd him. Damn her invention. [*Aside*] Pray, colonel—ha, ha, ha! it's very pleasant, ha, ha!—was this the same lady you met upon the *Terriero de Passa* this morning?

Col. B. Faith, I can't tell, sir; I had a design to know who that lady was, but my dog of a footman, whom I had ordered to watch her home, fell fast asleep. I gave him a good heating for his neglect, and I have never seen the rascal since.

Fred. Here he comes.

Enter GIBBY.

Col. B. Where have you been, sirrah?

Gibby. Troth, Ise been seeking ye, and lik yer honour, these twa hours and mair. I bring thee glad teedings, sir.

Col. B. What, have you found the lady?

Gibby. Goud faith, ha' I, sir; and she's call'd donna Violante, and her parent don Pedro de Mendosa; and, gin ye will gang wi' me, and lik yer honour, Ise make ye ken the hoose right weel.

Fel. Oh, torture, torture!

[*Aside.*

Col. B. Ha! Violante! That's the lady's name of the house where my incognita is: sure it could not be her; at least it was not the same house, I'm confident. [*Aside.*

Fred. Violante! 'Tis false; I would not have you credit him, colonel.

Gibby. The deel burst my bladder, sir, gin I lee.

Fel. Sirrah, I say you do lie, and I'll make you eat it, you dog; [*Kicks him*] and if your master will justify you—

Col. B. Not I, faith, sir. I answer for nobody's lies hut my own. If you please, kick him again.

Gibby. But gin he does, Ise na tak it, sir, gin he was a thousand Spaniards. [*Walks about in a Passion.*]

Col. B. I owed you a beating, sirrah, and I am obliged to this gentleman for taking the trouble off my hands; therefore say no more, d'ye hear, sir? [*Apart to Gibby.*]

Gibby. Troth de I, sir, and feel tee.

Fred. This must be a mistake, colonel; for I know *Violante* perfectly well, and I am certain she would not meet you upon the *Terriero de Passa*.

Col. B. Don't be too positive, *Frederic*. Now I have some reasons to believe it was that very lady.

Fel. You'll very much oblige me, sir, if you'd let me know these reasons.

Col. B. Sir!

Fel. Sir, I say I have a right to inquire into these reasons you speak of.

Col. B. Ha, ha! really, sir, I cannot conceive how you, or any man, can have a right to inquire into my thoughts.

Fel. Sir, I have a right to every thing that relates to *Violante*.—And he that traduces her fame, and refuses to give his reasons for't, is a villain. [*Draws.*]

Col. B. What the devil have I been doing? Now, blisters on my tongue by dozens. [*Aside.*]

Fred. Pr'ythee, *Felix*, don't quarrel till you know for what: this is all a mistake, I'm positive.

Col. B. Look you, sir, that I dare draw my sword, I think will admit of no dispute.—But though fighting's my trade, I'm not in love with it, and think it more honourable to decline this business than pursue it.—This may be a mistake: however, I'll give you my honour never to have any affair, directly or indirectly, with *Violante*, provided she is your *Violante*; but if there should happen to be another of that name, I hope you will not engross all the *Violantes* in the kingdom.

Fel. Your vanity has given me sufficient reason to believe I'm not mistaken. I'll not be imposed upon, sir.

Col. B. Nor I be bullied, sir.

Fel. Bullied! 'Sdeath, such another word, and I'll nail thee to the wall.

Col. B. Are you sure of that, Spaniard? [*Draws.*

Gibby. [*Draws*] Say na mair, mon. O'my saul, here's twa to twa. Dinna fear, sir, Gibby stonds by ye for the honour of Scotland. [*Vapours about.*

Fred. [*Interposes*] By St. Anthony, you shan't fight on bare suspicion: be certain of the injury, and then——

Fel. That I will, this moment; and then, sir—I hope you are to be found——

Col. B. Whenever you please, sir. [*Exit Felix.*

Gibby. 'Sbleed, sir, there ne'er was a Scotsman yet that shamed to show his face. [*Struts about.*

Fred. So, quarrels spring up like mushrooms, in a minute. Violante and he were but just reconciled, and you have furnish'd him with fresh matter for falling out again; and I am certain, colonel, Gibby is in the wrong.

Gibby. Gin I be, sir, the mon that tald me leed; and gin he did, the deel be my landlord, hell my winter-quarters, and a rape my winding-sheet, gin I dee not lick him as lang as I can haud a stick in my hond, now see ye.....

Col. B. I am sorry for what I have said, for the lady's sake: but who could divine that she was his mistress? Pr'ythee who is this warm spark?

Fred. He is the son of one of our grandees, named don Lopez de Pimentell, a very honest gentleman; but something passionate in what relates to his love. He is an only son, which may perhaps be one reason for indulging his passion.

Col. B. When parents have but one child, they either make a madman or a fool of him.

Fred. He is not the only child; he has a sister; but I think, through the severity of his father, who would have married her against her inclination, she has made her escape; and notwithstanding he has offered five hundred pounds, he can get no tidings of her.

Col. B. Ha! how long has she been missing?

Fred. Nay, but since last night, it seems.

Col. B. Last night! The very time! [*Aside*] How went she?

Fred. Nobody can tell: they conjecture through the window.

Col. B. I'm transported! This must be the lady I caught. [*Aside*] What sort of a woman is she?

Fred. Middle-sized, a lovely brown, a fine pouting lip, eyes that roll and languish, and seem to speak the exquisite pleasure her arms could give.

Col. B. Oh! I am fired with the description!—'Tis the very she. [*Aside*] What's her name?

Fred. Isabella.—You are transported, colonel.

Col. B. I have a natural tendency in me to the flesh, thou know'st; and who can hear of charms so exquisite, and yet remain unmoved?—Oh, how I long for the appointed hour! I'll to the Terriero de Passa, and wait my happiness; if she fails to meet me, I'll once more attempt to find her at Violante's, in spite of her brother's jealousy. [*Aside*] Dear Frederic, I beg your pardon, but I had forgot I was to meet a gentleman upon business at five; I'll endeavour to dispatch him, and wait on you again as soon as possible.

Fred. Your humble servant, colonel.

Col. B. Gibby, I have no business with you at present. [*Erit.*]

Gibby. That's weel. Now will I gang and seek this loon, and gar him gang with me to don Pedro's hoose. —Gin he'll no gang of himself, I'se gar him gang by the lug, sir. Godswarbit, Gibby hates a leer. [*Erit.*]

SCENE II. VIOLANTE'S Lodgings.

Enter VIOLANTE and ISABELLA.

Isa. The hour draws on, Violante, and now my heart begins to fail me; but I resolve to venture, for all that.

Vio. What, does your courage sink, Isabella?

Isa. Only the force of resolution a little retreated; but I'll rally it again, for all that.

Enter FLORA.

Flora. Don Felix is coming up, madam.

Isa. My brother! Which way shall I get out?—Dispatch him as soon as you can, dear Violante.

[*Exit into the Closet.*]

Vio. I will.

Enter FELIX, in a surly Humour.

Felix, what brings you back so soon? did I not say to-morrow?

Fel. My passion chokes me; I cannot speak—Oh! I shall burst! [*Aside. Throws himself into a Chair.*]

Vio. Bless me, are you not well, my Felix?

Fel. Yes—no—I don't know what I am.

Vio. Hey-day! What's the matter now? Another jealous whim!

Fel. With what an air she carries it!—I sweat at her impudence. [*Aside.*]

Vio. If I were in your place, Felix, I'd choose to stay at home when these fits of spleen are upon me, and not trouble such persons as are not obliged to bear with them. [*Here he affects to be careless of her.*]

Fel. I am very sensible, madam, of what you mean: I disturb you, no doubt; but were I in a better humour, I should not incommode you less. I am but too well convinced you could easily dispense with my visit.

Vio. When you behave yourself as you ought to do, no company so welcome; but when you reserve me for your ill nature, I waive your merit, and consider what's due to myself.—And I must be so free to tell you, Felix, that these humours of yours will abate, if not absolutely destroy, the very principles of love.

Fel. [*Rises*] And I must be so free to tell you, madam, that since you have made such ill returns to the respect that I have paid you, all you do shall be indifferent to me for the future; and you shall find me abandon your empire with so little difficulty, that I'll convince the world your chains are not so hard to break as your vanity would tempt you to believe.—I cannot brook the provocation you give.

Vio. This is not to be borne—Insolent! You abandon! You! Whom I've so often forbade ever to see me more! Have you not fallen at my feet? Implored my favour and forgiveness? Did not you trembling wait, and wish, and sigh, and swear yourself into my heart? Ungrateful man! if my chains are so easily broke, as you pretend, then you are the silliest coxcomb living, you did not break 'em long ago; and I must think him

capable of brooking any thing, on whom such usage could make no impression.

Fel. I always believed, madam, my weakness was the greatest addition to your power; you would be less imperious, had my inclination been less forward to oblige you.—You have, indeed, forbade me your sight, but your vanity even then assured you I would return, and I was fool enough to feed that vanity—Your eyes, with all their boasted charms, have acquired the greatest glory in conquering me. And the brightest passage of your life is, wounding this heart with such arms as pierce but few persons of my rank.

[Walks about in a great passion.]

Vio. Matchless arrogance! True, sir, I should have kept measures better with you, if the conquest had been worth preserving; but we easily hazard what gives us no pain to lose.—As for my eyes, you are mistaken if you think they have vanquished none but you; there are men above your boasted rank, who have confessed their power, when their misfortune in pleasing you made them obtain such a disgraceful victory.

Fel. Yes, madam, I am no stranger to your victories.

Vio. And what you call the brightest passage of my life, is not the least glorious part of yours.

Fel. Ha, ha, don't put yourself in a passion, madam, for I assure you, after this day, I shall give you no trouble.—You may meet your sparks on the Terriero de Passa, at four in the morning, without the least regard to me; for when I quit your chamber, the world shan't bring me back.

Vio. I am so well pleased with your resolution, I don't care how soon you take your leave.—But what you mean by the Terriero de Passa, at four in the morning, I can't guess.

Fel. No, no, no, not you—You were not upon the Terriero de Passa, at four this morning?

Vio. No, I was not; but if I was, I hope I may walk where I please, and at what hour I please, without asking your leave.

Fel. Oh, doubtless, madam! and you might meet colonel Briton there, and afterwards send your emis-

sary to fetch him to your house—and upon your father's coming in, thrust him into your bed-chamber—without asking my leave. 'Tis no business of mine, if you are exposed among all the footmen in town—nay, if they ballad you, and cry you about at a halfpenny a piece—they may without my leave.

Vio. Audacious! don't provoke me—don't; my reputation is not to be sported with [*Going up to him*] at this rate.—No, sir, it is not. [*Bursts into Tears*] Inhuman Felix!—Oh, Isabella, what a train of ills thou hast brought on me! [*Aside.*

Fel. Ha! I cannot bear to see her weep—A woman's tears are far more fatal than our swords. [*Aside*]—Oh, Violante—'Sdeath! What a dog am I? Now have I no power to stir.—Dost thou not know such a person as colonel Briton? Pr'ythee tell me, didst not thou meet him at four this morning upon the Terriero de Passa?

Vio. Were it not to clear my fame, I would not answer thee, thou black ingrate!—But I cannot bear to be reproached with what I even blush to think of, much less to act. By heaven, I have not seen the Terriero de Passa this day.

Fel. Did not a Scotch footman attack you in the street neither, Violante?

Vio. Yes; but he mistook me for another, or he was drunk, I know not which.

Fel. And do you not know this Scotch colonel?

Vio. Pray ask me no more questions; this night shall clear my reputation, and leave you without excuse for your base suspicions. More than this I shall not satisfy you, therefore pray leave me.

Fel. Didst thou ever love me, Violante?

Vio. I'll answer nothing.—You were in haste to be gone just now; I should be very well pleased to be alone, sir. [*She sits down, and turns aside.*

Fel. I shall not long interrupt your contemplation.—Stubborn to the last. [*Aside.*

Vio. Did ever woman involve herself as I have done?

[*Aside.*

Fel. Now would I give one of my eyes to be friends with her; for something whispers to my soul she is not

guilty. [*Aside. He pauses, then pulls a Chair, and sits by her at a little distance, looking at her some time without speaking, then draws a little nearer to her*] Give me your hand at parting, however, Violante, won't you? [*He lays his Hand upon her Knee several times*] Won't you—won't you—won't you?

Vio. [*Half regarding him*] Won't I do what?

Fel. You know what I would have, Violante. Oh! my heart!

Vio. [*Smiles*] I thought my chains were easily broke.
[*Lays her Hand in his.*]

Fel. [*Draws his Chair close to hers, and Kisses her Hand in a rapture*] Too well thou knowest thy strength—Oh, my charming angel, my heart is all thy own! Forgive my hasty passion, 'tis the transport of a love sincere! Oh, Violante, Violante!

Ped. [*Within*] Bid Sancho get a new wheel to my chariot presently.

Vio. Bless me, my father return'd! What shall we do now, Felix? We are ruin'd, past redemption.

Fel. No, no, no, my love; I can leap from the closet window. [*Runs to the Door where Isabella is, who closes it and bolts herself in*] Confusion! somebody bolts the door withinside. I'll see who you have conceal'd here, if I die for't. Oh, Violante, hast thou again sacrific'd me to my rival?

[*Draws.*]
Vio. By heaven, thou hast no rival in my heart! let that suffice—Nay, sure you will not let my father find you here—Distraction!

Fel. Indeed but I shall, except you command this door to be opened, and that way conceal me from his sight. [*He struggles with her to come at the Door.*]

Vio. Hear me, Felix—Though I were sure the refusing what you ask would separate us for ever, by all that's powerful you shall not enter here. Either you do love me, or you do not. Convince me by your obedience.

Fel. That's not the matter in debate—I will know who is in this closet, let the consequence be what it will. Nay, nay, nay, you strive in vain; I will go in.

Vio. You shall not go in.

Enter DON PEDRO.

Ped. Hey-day! What's here to do? "I will go in," and "you shan't go in"—and "I will go in"—Why, who are you, sir?

Fel. 'Sdeath! What shall I say now? [*Aside.*

Ped. Don Felix, pray what's your business in my house? Ha, sir.

Vio. Oh, sir, what miracle return'd you home so soon? Some angel 'twas that brought my father back to succour the distress'd. This ruffian, he, I cannot call him gentleman—has committed such an uncommon rudeness, as the most profligate wretch would be ashamed to own. As I was at my devotions in my closet—

Fel. Devotions!

Vio. I heard a loud knocking at my door, mix'd with a woman's voice, which seemed to imply she was in danger. I flew to the door with the utmost speed, where a lady veil'd rush'd in upon me, who falling on her knees begged my protection from a gentleman, who she said pursued her. I took compassion on her tears, and locked her in this closet; but in the surprise, having left open the door, this very person whom you see, with his sword drawn, ran in, protesting if I refused to give her up to his revenge he'd force the door.

Fel. What, in the name of goodness, does she mean to do? hang me! [*Aside.*

Vio. I strove with him till I was out of breath, and had you not come as you did, he must have enter'd—But he's in drink, I suppose, or he could not have been guilty of such an indecorum. [*Leering at Felix.*

Ped. I'm amazed!

Fel. The devil never fail'd a woman at a pinch:—what a tale has she form'd in a minute—In drink, quotha: a good hint; I'll lay hold on't to bring myself off. [*Aside.*

Ped. Fie, don Felix! No sooner rid of one broil but you are commencing another. To assault a lady with a naked sword derogates much from the character of a gentleman, I assure you.

Fel. [*Counterfeits drunkenness*] Who? I assault a

lady! Upon honour, the lady assaulted me, sir, and would have seized this body politic upon the king's highway—Let her come out, and deny it, if she can.—Pray, sir, command the door to be open'd, and let her prove me a liar, if she knows how.

Ped. Ay, ay, who doubts it, sir?—Open the door, Violante, and let the lady come out. Come, I warrant thee he shan't hurt her.

Fel. No, no, I won't hurt the dear creature.—Now which way will she come off? [*Aside.*]

Vio. [*Unlocks the Door*] Come forth, madam; none shall dare to touch your veil—I'll convey you out with safety, or lose my life.—I hope she understands me. [*Aside.*]

Re-enter ISABELLA, veiled, who crosses the Stage.

Isa. Excellent girl! [*Exit.*]

Fel. The devil! a woman! I'll see if she be really so. [*Aside.*]

Vio. Get clear of my father, and follow me to the Terriero de Passa, when all mistakes shall be rectified.

[*Apart to Felix, and exit. Felix offers to follow her.*]

Ped. [*Draws his Sword*] Not a step, sir, till the lady be past your recovery; I never suffer the laws of hospitality to be violated in my house, sir.—Come, sir, you and I will take a pipe and bottle together.

Fel. Damn your pipe, and damn your bottle! I hate drinking and smoking—and how will you help yourself, old Whiskers?

Ped. As to smoking or drinking, you have your liberty; but you shall stay, sir.

Fel. But I won't stay; for I don't like your company: besides, I have the best reason in the world for my not staying.

Ped. Ay! What's that?

Fel. Why, I am going to be married; and so good by.

Ped. To be married! it can't be! Why you are drunk, Felix!

Fel. Drunk! Ay to be sure. You don't think I'd go to be married if I was sober—But drunk or sober I

am going to be married for all that; and if you won't believe me, to convince you, I'll show you the contract, old gentleman.

Ped. Ay do; come, let's see this contract then.

Fel. Yes, yes, I'll show you the contract—I'll show you the contract—Here, sir—here's the contract.

[*Draws a Pistol.*]

Ped. [*Starts*] Well, well, I'm convinced; go, go—pray go and be married, sir.

Fel. Yes, yes, I'll go—I'll go and be married; but shan't we take a bottle first?

Ped. No, no—pray, dear sir, go and be married.

Fel. Very well, very well; [*Going*] but I insist upon your taking one glass, though.

Ped. No, not now—some other time.—Consider, the lady waits.

Fel. What a cross old fool! First he will, and then he won't; and then he will, and then he won't.

[*Aside, and exit.*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Here's don Lopez de Pimentell, to wait on you, seignior.

Ped. What the devil does he want? He is not going to be married too—Bring him up; [*Exit Servant*] he's in pursuit of his son, I suppose.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. I am glad to find you at home, don Pedro; I was told that you was seen upon the road to—this afternoon.

Ped. That might be, my lord; but I had the misfortune to break the wheel of my chariot, which obliged me to return.—What is your pleasure with me, my lord?

Lop. I am inform'd my daughter is in your house.

Ped. That's more than I know, my lord; but here was your son just now, as drunk as an emperor.

Lop. My son drunk! I never saw him in drink in my life. Where is he, pray, sir?

Ped. Gone to be married.

Lop. Married! To whom? I don't know that he courted any body.

Ped. Nay, I know nothing of that—but I'm sure he show'd me the contract—Within there!

Enter a Servant.

Bid my daughter come hither; she'll tell you another story, my lord.

Serv. She's gone out in a chair, sir.

Ped. Out in a chair! what do you mean, sir?

Serv. As I say, sir; and donna Isabella went in another just before her.

Lop. Isabella!

Serv. And don Felix followed in another; I overheard them all bid the chairs go to the Terriero de Passa.

Ped. Ha! what business has my daughter there? I am confounded, and know not what to think—Within there.

Lop. My heart misgives me plaguily—Call me an alguazil, I'll pursue them straight. *[Exit.*

SCENE III. *The Street before DON PEDRO's House.*

Enter LISSARDO.

Lis. I wish I could see Flora—Methinks I have an hankering kindness after the slut—We must be reconciled.

Enter GIBBY.

Gibby. Aw my sol, sir, but Ise blithe to find ye here now.

Lis. Ha! brother! give me thy hand, boy.

Gibby. No se fast, se ye me—Brether me ne brethers; I scorn a leer as muckle as a thief, se ye now; and ye must gang intol this house with me, and justify to donna Violante's face, that she was the lady that gang'd in here this morn, se ye me, or the deel ha my sol, sir, but ye and I shall be twa folks.

Lis. Justify it to donna Violante's face, quotha; for what? sure you don't know what you say.

Gibby. Troth de I, sir, as weel as ye do; therefore come along, and make no mair words about it.

Lis. Why, what the devil do you mean? Don't you consider you are in Portugal? Is the fellow mad?

Gibby. Fellow! Ise none of yer fellow, sir: and gin

the place were hell, I'd gar ye de me justiae. [*Lissardo going*] Nay, the deel a feet ye gang.

[*Lays hold of him, and knocks.*]

Lis. Ha! don Pedro himself; I wish I were fairly off.

[*Aside.*]

Enter DON PEDRO.

Ped. How now? what makes you knock so loud?

Gibby. Gin this be don Pedro's house, sir, I would speak with donna Violante, his daughter.

Ped. Ha! what is it you want with my daughter, pray?

Gibby. An she be your daughter, and lik your honour, command her to come out, and answer for herself now, and either justify or disprove what this cheeld told me this morn.

Lis. So, here will be a fine piece of work. [*Aside.*]

Ped. Why, what did he tell you, ha?

Gibby. By my sol, sir, Ise tell you aw the truth; my master got a pratty lady upon the how-de-call't—passa—here, at five this morn, and he gar me watch her beam—And in truth I lodg'd her here; and meeting this ill-favour'd thiefe, se ye me, I speered who she was—and he told me her name was donna Violante, don Pedro de Mendosa's daughter.

Ped. Ha! my daughter with a man, abroad at five in the morning. Death, hell, and furies! By St. Anthony, I'm undone.

Gibby. Wounds, sir, ye put yer saint intul bony company.

Ped. Who is your master, you dog you?

Gibby. You dog you! 'Sbleed, sir, don't call names—I won't tell you who my master is, se ye me now.

Ped. And who are you, rascal, that know my daughter so well? Ha! [*To Lissardo, holding up his Cane.*]

Lis. What shall I say to make him give this Scotch dog a good beating? [*Aside*] I know your daughter, seignior? Not I; I never saw your daughter in all my life.

Gibby. [*Knocks him down with his Fist*] Deel, ha my sol, sar, gin ye get no your carich for that lie now.

Ped. What, hoa! Where are all my servants?

Enter COLONEL BRITON, FELIX, ISABELLA, and VIOLANTE.

Raise the house in pursuit of my daughter.

Col. B. Hey-day! What's here to do?

Gibby. This is the loon-like tik, an lik your honour, that sent mee heam with a lee this morn.

Fel. This is a day of jubilee, Lissardo: no quarrelling with him this day.

Lis. A plague take his fists.—Egad, these Britons are but a word and a blow.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. So, have I found you, daughter? Then you have not hang'd yourself yet, I see.

Col. B. But she is married, my lord.

Lop. Married! Zounds, to whom?

Col. B. Even to your humble servant, my lord. If you please to give us your blessing. [*Kneels.*]

Lop. Why, hark ye, mistress, are you really married? [*To Isabella.*]

Isa. Really so, my lord.

Lop. And who are you, sir? [*To Colonel Briton.*]

Col. B. An honest North Briton by birth, and a colonel by commission, my lord.

Lop. An heretic, the devil. [*Holds up his Hands.*]

Ped. She has play'd you a slippery trick indeed, my lord!—Well, my girl, thou hast been to see thy friend married.—Next week thou shalt have a better husband, my dear. [*To Violante.*]

Fel. Next week is a little too soon, sir; I hope to live longer than that.

Ped. What do you mean, sir? You have not made a rib of my daughter too, have you?

Vio. Indeed but he has, sir, I know not how; but he took me in an unguarded minute,—when my thoughts were not over strong for a nunnery, father.

Lop. Your daughter has play'd you a slippery trick too, signior.

Ped. But your son shall never be the better for't, my

lord; her twenty thousand pounds was left on certain conditions, and I'll not part with a shilling.

Lop. But we have a certain thing call'd law, shall make you do justice, sir.

Ped. Well, we'll try that,—my lord, much good may it do you with your daughter-in-law.

Lop. I wish you much joy of your rib.

[*Exeunt Pedro and Lopez.*]

Enter FREDERIC.

Fel. Frederic, welcome!—I sent for thee to be partaker of my happiness; and pray give me leave to introduce you to the cause of it.

Fred. Your messenger has told me all, and I sincerely share in all your happiness.

Col. B. To the right about, Frederic; wish thy friend joy.

Fred. I do, with all my soul;—and, madam, I congratulate your deliverance. [*To Isabella*—Your suspicions are clear'd now, I hope, Felix?

Fel. They are; and I heartily ask the colonel pardon, and wish him happy with my sister; for love has taught me to know, that every man's happiness consists in choosing for himself.

Lis. After that rule, I fix here. [*To Flora.*

Flora. That's your mistake; I prefer my lady's service, and turn you over to her that pleaded right and title to you to-day.

Lis. Choose, proud fool; I shan't ask you twice.

Gibby. What say ye now, lass; will ye go yer hand to poor Gibby? [*To Inis.*

Inis. That I may not leave my lady—I take you at your word.—And though our wooing has been short, I'll, by her example, love you dearly.

Fel. Now, my Violante, I shall proclaim thy virtues to the world.

Let us no more thy sex's conduct blame,
Since thou'rt a proof to their eternal fame,

That man has no advantage but the name. [*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE

CUSTOM, with all our modern laws combin'd,
Has given such power despotic to mankind,
That we have only so much virtue now,
As they are pleas'd in favour to allow.
Thus, like mechanic work, we're us'd with scorn,
And wound up only for a present turn.
Some are for having our whole sex enslaved, .
Affirming we've no souls, and can't be saved:
But were the women all of my opinion,
We'd soon shake off this false usurp'd dominion;
We'd make the tyrants own, that we could prove
As fit for other business as for love.
Lord! what prerogative might we obtain,
Could we from yielding a few months refrain!
How fondly would our dangling lovers dote!
What homage would be paid to petticoat!
'Twould be a jest to see the change of fate;
How might we all of politics debate;
Promise and swear what we ne'er meant to do,
And, what's still harder, keep our secrets too.
"Ay, marry! keep a secret," says a beau,
And sneers at some ill-natur'd wit below;
But faith, if we should tell but half we know,
There's many a spruce young fellow in this place,
Would never more presume to show his face.
Women are not so weak, whate'er men prate:
How many tip-top beaux have had the fate
To enjoy from mamma's secrets, their estate!
Who, if her early folly had made known,
Had rid behind the coach that's now their own.
But here the wondrous secret you discover:
A lady ventures for a friend—a lover.
Prodigious! For my part, I frankly own,
I'd spoil'd the wonder, and the woman shown.

Z A R A .

A Tragedy.

BY AARON HILL, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,

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FOR WHITTINGHAM AND ARLISS, PATERNOSTER
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1816.



ZARA.

THIS tragedy, which derives additional celebrity from the circumstance of Mrs. Cibber's having made her first appearance in the character of *Zara*, was originally produced in the year 1735.

Voltaire's tragedy of *ZAIRE* was the prototype of the piece before us; but freedom of translation in some parts, and originality of thought and expression in others, have rendered this play as completely Mr. Hill's as if he had never seen it in the French. It was always well received, and still occasionally takes its turn in the list of acting plays.



PROLOGUE.

THE *French*, howe'er mercurial they may seem,
Extinguish half their fire by critic phlegm :
While *English* writers nature's freedom claim,
And warm their scenes with an ungovern'd flame.
'Tis strange that nature never should inspire
A *Racine's* judgment with a *Shakspeare's* fire!

Howe'er, to-night—(to promise much we're loath),
But—you've a chance, to have a taste of both.
From *English* plays, *Zara's French* author fir'd,
Confess'd his muse beyond herself inspir'd ;
From rack'd *Othello's* rage he rais'd his style,
And snatch'd the brand that lights this tragic pile ;
Zara's success his utmost hopes outflow,
And a twice twentieth weeping audience drew.

As for our *English* friend, he leaves to you,
Whate'er may seem to his performance due ;
No views of gain his hopes or fears engage ;
He gives a child of leisure to the stage :
Willing to try, if yet, forsaken nature
Can charm, with any one remember'd feature.

Thus far the author speaks ; but now the player,
With trembling heart, prefers his humble prayer.
To-night, the greatest venture of my life
Is lost or sav'd, as you receive—a wife.
If time, you think, may ripen her to merit,
With gentle smiles support her wav'ring spirit.
Zara, in *France*, at once an actress rais'd,
Warm'd into skill, by being kindly prais'd :
O! could such wonders here from favour flow,
How would our *Zara's* heart with transport glow !
But she, alas! by juster fears oppress'd,
Begg but your bare endurance, at the best :
Her unskill'd tongue would simple nature speak,
Nor dares her bounds, for false applauses break.

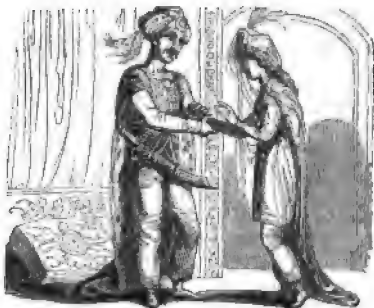
Amidst a thousand *faults*, her best pretence
 To *please*—is unpresuming innocence.
 When a chaste heart's distress your *grief* demands,
 One silent tear outweighs a thousand hands.
 If she conveys the pleasing *passions* RIGHT,
 Guard and support her this decisive night;
 If she *MISTAKES*, or finds her *strength* too *small*,
 Let interposing pity—break her fall.
 In you it rests to save her, or destroy;
 If she draws tears from you, I weep—for JOY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Covent Garden, 1804.

Osman	Master Betty.
Lusignan	Mr. Hargrave.
Nerestan	Mr. C. Kemble.
Chatillon	Mr. Chapman.
Orasmin	Mr. Claremont.
Melidor	Mr. Jefferies.
Zara	Mrs. H. Siddons.
Selima	Miss Marriott.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I.

Enter ZARA and SELIMA.

Sel. **IT** moves my wonder, young and beauteous Zara,
Whence these new sentiments inspire your heart!
Your peace of mind increases with your charms;
Tears now no longer shade your eyes' soft lustre:
You meditate no more those happy climes
To which Nerestan will return to guide you.
You talk no more of that gay nation now,
Where men adore their wives, and woman's power
Draws rev'rence from a polish'd people's softness:
Their husbands' equals, and their lovers' queens!
Free, without scandal; wise, without restraint;
Why have you ceas'd to wish this happy change?
A barr'd seraglio! sad, unsocial life!
Scorn'd, and a slave! All this has lost its terror;
And Syria rivals, now, the banks of Seine.

Zara. Joys which we do not know, we do not wish.
My fate's bound in by Sion's sacred wall:
Clos'd from my infancy within this palace,

Custom has learnt, from time, the power to please.
I claim no share in the remoter world,
The sultan's property, his will my law;
Unknowing all but him, his power, his fame;
To live his subject is my only hope.
All else, an empty dream——

Sel. Have you forgot
Absent Nerestan then? whose gen'rous friendship
So nobly vow'd redemption from your chains!
How oft have you admir'd his dauntless soul?
Osman, his conqu'ror, by his courage charm'd,
Trusted his faith, and on his word releas'd him:
'Though not return'd in time—we yet expect him.
Nor had his noble journey other motive,
Than to procure our ransom.—And is this,
This dear, warm hope, become an idle dream?

Zara. Since after two long years he not returns,
'Tis plain his promise stretch'd beyond his power,
A stranger and a slave, unknown, like him,
Proposing much, means little; talks and vows,
Delighted with a prospect of escape:
He promis'd to redeem ten Christians more,
And free us all from slavery! I own
I once admir'd the unprofitable zeal,
But now it charms no longer.

Sel. What, if yet,
He, faithful should return, and hold his vow;
Would you not, then——

Zara. No matter—Time is past,
And every thing is chang'd.

Sel. But whence comes this?

Zara. Go; 'twere too much to tell thee Zara's fate:
The sultan's secrets all are sacred here:
But my fond heart delights to mix with thine.
Some three months past, when thou, and other slaves,
Were forc'd to quit fair Jordan's flow'ry bank;
Heav'n, to cut short the anguish of my days,
Rais'd me to comfort by a pow'ful hand:
This mighty Osman!——

Sel. What of him?

Zara. This sultan,
This conqueror of the Christians, loves——

Sel. Whom?

Zara. Zara!

Thou blushest, and I guess thy thoughts accuse me :
But, know me better—'twas unjust suspicion.
All emperor as he is, I cannot stoop
To honours, that bring shame and baseness with 'em :
Reason and pride, those props of modesty,
Sustain my guarded heart, and strengthen virtue ;
No—I shall now astonish thee ; his greatness
Submits to own a pure and honest flame.
Among the shining crowds, which live to please him,
His whole regard is fix'd on me alone :
He offers marriage ; and its rites now wait
To crown me empress of this eastern world.

Sel. Your virtue and your charms deserve it all :
My heart is not surpris'd, but struck to hear it.
If to be empress can complete your happiness,
I rank myself, with joy, among your slaves.

Zara. Be still my equal, and enjoy my blessings ;
For, thou partaking, they will bless me more.

Sel. Alas ! but heaven ! will it permit this marriage ?
Will not this grandeur, falsely call'd a bliss,
Plant bitterness, and root it in your heart ?
Have you forgot you are of Christian blood ? [thus

Zara. Ah, me ! what hast thou said, why wouldst thou
Recall my wav'ring thoughts ? How know I what,
Or whence I am ? Heaven kept it hid in darkness,
Conceal'd me from myself, and from my blood.

Sel. Nerestan, who was born a Christian, here,
Asserts, that you like him, had Christian parents ;
Besides—that cross, which from your infant years
Has been preserv'd, was found upon your bosom,
As if design'd by heav'n, a pledge of faith
Due to the God you purpose to forsake !

Zara. Can my fond heart, on such a feeble proof,
Embrace a faith abhor'd by him I love ?
I see too plainly custom forms us all ;
Our thoughts, our morals, our most fix'd belief,

Are consequences of our place of birth :
Born beyond Ganges, I had been a Pagan,
In France a Christian, I am here a Saracen :
'Tis but instruction all ! Our parents' hand
Writes on our heart the first faint characters,
Which time, re-tracing deepens into strength,
That nothing can efface, but death or heaven !
Thou wert not made a pris'ner in this place,
Till after reasons, borrowing force from years,
Had lent its lustre to enlighten faith :
For me, who in my cradle was their slave,
Thy Christian doctrines were too lately taught me :
Yet, far from having lost the rev'rence due,
This cross, as often as it meets my eye,
Strikes through my heart a kind of awful fear !
I honour, from my soul, the Christian laws,
Those laws, which, softening nature by humanity,
Melt nations into brotherhood ; no doubt
Christians are happy ; and 'tis just to love them.

Sel. Why have you then declar'd yourself their foe ?
Why will you join your hand with this proud Osman's,
Who owes his triumph to the Christians' ruin ?

Zara. Ah ! who could slight the offer of his heart ?
Nay, for I mean to tell thee all my weakness,
Perhaps I had, ere now, profess'd thy faith,
But Osman lov'd me—and I've lost it all :
I think on none but Osman ; my pleas'd heart,
Fill'd with the blessing, to be lov'd by him,
Wants room for other happiness. Oh, my friend !
I talk not of a sceptre, which he gives me :
No—to be charm'd with that were thanks too humble !
Offensive tribute, and too poor for love !
'Twas Osman won my heart, not Osman's crown :
I love not in him aught besides himself.
Thou think'st, perhaps, that these are starts of passion :
But had the will of heav'n, less bent to bless him,
Doom'd Osman to my chains, and me to fill
The throne that Osman sits on—ruin and wretchedness
Catch and consume my wishes, but I would—
To raise me to myself, descend to him. [*Exit Selima.*]

A grand March. Enter OSMAN, reading a Paper, which he re-delivers to ORASMIN, with Attendants.

Osman. Wait my return; or should there be a cause
That may require my presence, do not fear
To enter; ever mindful that my own *[Exit Oras. &c.]*
Follows my people's happiness. At length,
Cares have releas'd my heart—to love and Zara.

Zara. 'Twas not in cruel absence, to deprive me
Of your imperial image; every where
You reign triumphant; memory supplies
Reflection with your power; and you, like heaven,
Are always present—and are always gracious.

Osman. The sultans, my great ancestors, bequeath'd
Their empire to me, but their taste they gave not;
Their laws, their lives, their loves, delight not me:
I know our prophet smiles on am'rous wishes,
And opens a wide field to vast desire;
I know, that at my will I might possess;
That, wasting tenderness in wild profusion,
I might look down to my surrounded feet,
And bless contending beauties. I might speak,
Serenely slothful, from within my palace,
And bid my pleasure be my people's law.
But, sweet as softness is, its end is cruel;
I can look round and count a hundred kings,
Unconquer'd by themselves, and slaves to others:
Hence was Jerusalem to Christians lost;
Hence from the distant Euxine to the Nile,
The trumpet's voice has wak'd the world to war;
Yet, amidst arms and death, thy power has reach'd me,
For thou disdain'st, like me, a languid love;
Glory and Zara join, and charm together.

Zara. I hear at once, with blushes and with joy,
This passion, so unlike your country's customs.

Osman. Passion, like mine, disdains my country's cus-
toms;
The jealousy, the faintness, the distrust,
The proud, superior coldness of the east.
I know to love you, Zara, with esteem;

To trust your virtue, and to court your soul.
Nobly confiding, I unveil my heart,
And dare inform you that 'tis all your own :
My joys must all be yours ; only my cares
Shall lie conceal'd within, and reach not Zara.

Zara. Oblig'd by this excess of tenderness,
How low, how wretched was the lot of Zara !
Too poor with aught but thanks to pay such blessings !

Osman. Not so—I love, and would be lov'd again ;
Let me confess it : I possess a soul,
That what it wishes, wishes ardently.
I should believe you hated, had you power
To love with moderation ; 'tis my aim,
In every thing to reach supreme perfection.
If, with an equal flame I touch your heart,
Marriage attends your smile. But know, 'twill make
Me wretched, if it makes not Zara happy.

Zara. Ah, sir ! if such a heart as gen'rous *Osman's*
Can, from my will, submit to take its bliss,
What mortal ever was decreed so happy ?
Pardon the pride with which I own my joy :
Thus wholly to possess the man I love !
To know, and to confess his will my fate !
To be the happy work of his dear hands !
To be——

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Osman. Already interrupted ! What ?
Who ? Whence ?

Oras. This moment, sir, there is arriv'd
That Christian slave, who, licens'd on his faith,
Went hence to France ; and now return'd, prays au-
dience.

Zara. Oh, heaven ! *[Aside.*

Osman. Admit him—What?—Why comes he not ?

Oras. He waits without. No Christian dares approach
This place, long sacred to the sultan's privacies.

Osman. Go—bring him with thee. Monarchs, like
the sun,
Shine but in vain, unwarming, if unseen ;
With forms and rev'rence let the great approach us ;

Not the unhappy; every place alike
Gives the distress'd a privilege to enter. [*Exit Orasmin.*]
I think with horror on these dreadful maxims,
Which harden kings insensibly to tyrants.

Re-enter ORASMIN, with NERESTAN.

Ner. Imperial sultan! honour'd ev'n by foes!
See me return'd, regardful of my vow,
And punctual to discharge a Christian's duty.
I bring the ransom of the captive Zara,
Fair Selima, the partner of her fortune,
And of ten Christian captives, pris'ners here.
You promis'd, sultan, if I should return,
'To grant their rated liberty; behold
I am return'd, and they are yours no more.
I would have stretch'd my purpose to myself,
But fortune has deny'd it; my poor all
Suffic'd no further, and a noble poverty
Is now my whole possession. I redeem
'The promis'd Christians; for I taught 'em hope:
But, for myself, I come again your slave,
To wait the fuller hand of future charity.

Osman. Christian! I must confess thy courage charms
me;
But let thy pride be taught it treads too high,
When it presumes to climb above my mercy.
Go ransomless thyself, and carry back
'Their unaccepted ransoms, join'd with gifts,
Fit to reward thy purpose: instead of ten,
Demand a hundred Christians; they are thine:
'Take 'em, and bid 'em teach their haughty country,
They left some virtue among Saracens.
Be Lusignan alone excepted. He
Who boasts the blood of kings, and dares lay claim
To my Jerusalem—that claim, his guilt!
I mourn his lot,
Who must in fetters, lost to day-light, pine
And sigh away old age in grief and pain.
For Zara—but to name her as a captive,
Were to dishonour language; she's a prize
Above thy purchase: all the Christian realms,

With all their kings to guide 'em; would unite
In vain, to force her from me. Go, retire.

Ner. For Zara's ransom, with her own consent,
I had your royal word. For Lusignan—
Unhappy, poor old man——

Osman. Was I not heard?
Have I not told thee, Christian, all my will?
What, if I prais'd thee! This presumptuous virtue,
Compelling my esteem, provokes my pride;
Be gone; and when to-morrow's sun shall rise,
On my dominions be not found—too near me.

[*Exit Nerestan.*

Zara. Assist him, heaven!

[*Aside.*

Osman. Zara, retire a moment.

Assume, throughout my palace, sovereign empire,
While I give orders to prepare the pomp
That waits to crown thee mistress of my throne.

[*Leads her out, and returns.*

Orasmin! didst thou mark th' imperious slave?
What could he mean?—he sigh'd—and, as he went,
Turn'd and look'd back at Zara!—didst thou mark it?

Oras. Alas! my sovereign master! let not jealousy
Strike high enough to reach your noble heart.

Osman. Jealousy, saidst thou? I disdain it. No!
Distrust is poor; and a misplac'd suspicion
Invites and justifies the falsehood fear'd.

Yet, as I love with warmth, so I could hate!

But Zara is above disguise and art.

Jealous! I was not jealous! If I was,
I am not—no—my heart—but, let us drown
Remembrance of the word, and of the image;
My heart is fill'd with a diviner flame.

Go, and prepare for the approaching nuptials.

I must allot one hour to thoughts of state,

Then all the smiling day is love and Zara's.

[*Exit Orasmin.*

Monarchs, by forms of pompous misery press'd,
In proud, unsocial misery, unblest'd,
Would, but for love's soft influence, curse their throne,
And, among crowded millions, live alone. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I.

Enter NERESTAN and CHATILLON.

Cha. Matchless Nerestan! generous and great!
You, who have broke the chains of hopeless slaves!
Appear, be known, enjoy your due delight;
The grateful weepers wait to clasp your knees;
'They throng to kiss the happy hand that sav'd 'em!
Indulge the kind impatience of their eyes,
And, at their head, command their hearts for ever.

Ner. Illustrious Chatillon! this praise o'erwhelms me;
What have I done beyond a Christian's duty,
Beyond what you would, in my place, have done?

Cha. True—it is every honest Christian's duty;
Nay, 'tis the blessing of such minds as ours,
For others' good to sacrifice our own.
Yet, happy they, to whom heav'n grants the power
To execute, like you, that duty's call.
For us, the relics of abandon'd war,
Forgot in France, and in Jerusalem,
Left to grow old in fetters, Osman's father

Consign'd us to the gloom of a damp dungeon,
Where, but for you, we must have groan'd out life,
And native France have bless'd our eyes no more.

Ner. The will of gracious heav'n, that soften'd Osman,
Inspir'd me for your sakes: but with our joy
Flows, mix'd, a bitter sadness. I had hop'd
To save from their perversion, a young beauty,
Who, in her infant innocence, with me,
Was made a slave by cruel Noradin;
When, sprinkling Syria with the blood of Christians,
Caesarea's walls saw Lusignan surpris'd,
And the proud crescent rise in bloody triumph.
From this seraglio having young escap'd,
Fate, three years since, restor'd me to my chains;
Then, sent to Paris on my plighted faith,
I flatter'd my fond hope with vain resolves,
To guide the lovely Zara to that court,
Where Lewis has establish'd virtue's throne:
But Osman will detain her—yet, not Osman;
Zara herself forgets she is a Christian,
And loves the tyrant sultan! Let that pass:
I mourn a disappointment still more cruel;
The prep of all our Christian hope is lost.

Cha. Dispose me at your will; I am your own.

Ner. Oh, sir, great Lusignan, so long their captive,
That last of an heroic race of kings;
That warrior, whose past fame has fill'd the world,
Osman refuses to my sighs for ever.

Cha. Nay, then we have been all redeem'd in vain;
Perish that soldier who would quit his chains,
And leave his noble chief behind in fetters.
Alas! you know him not as I have known him:
Thank heav'n, that plac'd your birth so far remov'd
From those detested days of blood and woe:
But I, less happy, was condemn'd to see
Thy walls, Jerusalem, beat down, and all
Our pious fathers' labours lost in ruins!
Heav'n! had you seen the very temple rifled,
The sacred sepulchre itself profan'd,
Fathers with children mingl'd, flame together,

And our last king, oppress'd with age and arms,
Murder'd, and bleeding o'er his murder'd sons!
Then Lusignan, sole remnant of his race,
Rallying our fated few amidst the flames,
Fearless, beneath the crush of falling towers,
The conqu'rors and the conquer'd, groans and death!
Dreadful—and waving in his hand a sword,
Red with the blood of infidels, cry'd out,
“This way, ye faithful Christians! follow me!”

Ner. How full of glory was that brave retreat!

Cha. 'Twas heav'n, no doubt, that sav'd and led him
on,

Pointed his path, and march'd our guardian guide:
We reach'd Cæsarea—there the general voice
Chose Lusignan, thenceforth to give us laws.
Alas! 'twas vain; Cæsarea could not stand
When Sion's self was fallen! we were betray'd;
And Lusignan condemn'd to length of life,
In chains, in damps, and darkness, and despair.

Ner. Oh! I should hate the liberty he shar'd not.
I knew too well the miseries you describe,
For I was born amidst them. Chains and death,
Cæsarea lost, and Saracens triumphant,
Were the first objects which my eyes e'er look'd on.
Hurried, an infant, among other infants,
Snatch'd from the bosoms of their bleeding mothers,
A temple sav'd us, till the slaughter ceas'd;
Then were we sent to this ill-fated city;
Here, in the palace of our former kings,
To learn from Saracens their hated faith,
And be completely wretched. Zara, too,
Shar'd this captivity; we both grew up
So near each other, that a tender friendship
Endear'd her to my wishes: my fond heart—
Pardon its weakness, bleeds to see her lost,
And, for a barbarous tyrant, quit her God!

Cha. Such is the Saracens too fatal policy;
Watchful seducers still of infant weakness!
But let us think: may not this Zara's int'rest,

Loving the sultan, and by him belov'd,
For Lusignan procure some softer sentence?

Ner. How shall I gain admission to her presence?

Osman has banish'd me; but that's a trifle:

Will the seraglio's portals open to me?

Or could I find that easy to my hopes,

What prospect of success from an apostate?

On whom I cannot look without disdain;

And who will read her shame upon my brow,

The hardest trial of a generous mind

Is to court favours from a hand it scorns.

Cha. Think it is Lusignan we seek to serve.

Ner. Well, it shall be attempted. Hark! who's this?
Are my eyes false? or is it really she?

Enter ZARA.

Zara. Start not, my worthy friend! I come to seek
you;

The sultan has permitted it; fear nothing:

But to confirm my heart, which trembles near you,

Soften that angry air, nor look reproach;

Why should we fear each other, both mistaking?

Associates from our birth, one prison held us,

One friendship taught affliction to be calm,

Till heaven thought fit to favour your escape,

And call you to the fields of happier France;

Thence, once again, it was my lot to find you

A pris'ner here; where, hid amongst a crowd

Of undistinguish'd slaves, with less restraint

I shar'd your frequent converse:

If pleas'd your pity, shall I say your friendship?

Or rather, shall I call it generous charity?

To form that noble purpose, to redeem

Distressful Zara—you procur'd my ransom,

And with a greatness that out-soar'd a crown,

Return'd yourself a slave, to give me freedom:

But heav'n has cast our fate for different climes;

Here, in Jerusalem, I fix for ever;

Yet, among all the shine that marks my fortune,

I shall with frequent tears remember yours.
Your goodness will for ever sooth my heart,
And keep your image still a dweller there:
Warm'd by your great example to protect
That faith that lifts humanity so high,
I'll be a mother to distressful Christians.

Ner. How! you protect the Christians! you, who can
Abjure their saving truth, and coldly see
Great Lusignan, their chief, die slow in chains!

Zara. To bring him freedom you behold me here;
You will this moment meet his eyes in joy.

Cha. Shall I then live to bless that happy hour?

Ner. Can Christians owe so dear a gift to Zara?

Zara. Hopeless I gather'd courage to entreat
The sultan for his liberty: amaz'd,
So soon to gain the happiness I wish'd!
See where they bring the good old chief, grown dim
With age, by pain and sorrows hasten'd on.

Cha. How is my heart dissolv'd with sudden joy.

Enter LUSIGNAN, led in by two Guards.

Lus. Where am I? From the dungeon's depth what
voice

Has call'd me to revisit long-lost day?

Am I with Christians? I am weak; forgive me,
And guide my trembling steps. I'm full of years;
My miseries have worn me more than age.

Am I in truth at liberty? *[Seats himself.]*

Cha. You are;

And every Christian's grief takes end with yours.

Lus. O light! O, dearer far than light, that voice!
Chatillon, is it you? my fellow martyr!

And shall our wretchedness indeed have end?

In what place are we now? my feeble eyes,
Dissolv'd to day-light, long in vain to find you.

Cha. This was the palace of your royal fathers:
'Tis now the son of Noradin's seraglio.

Zara. The master of this place, the mighty Osman,
Distinguishes, and loves to cherish virtue.
This gen'rous Frenchman, yet a stranger to you

Drawn from his native soil, from peace and rest,
 Brought the vow'd ransom of ten Christian slaves,
 Himself contented to remain a captive ;
 But Osman, charm'd by greatness like his own,
 To equal what he lov'd, has giv'n him you.

Lus. So gen'rous France inspires her social sons !
 They have been ever dear and useful to me.
 Would I were nearer to him. Noble sir,

[Nerestan approaches.]

How have I merited, that you for me
 Should pass such distant seas to bring me blessings,
 And hazard your own safety for my sake ?

Ner. My name, sir, is Nerestan ; born in Syria,
 I wore the chains of slavery from my birth ;
 Till quitting the proud crescent for the court
 Where warlike Lewis reigns, beneath his eye
 I learnt the trade of arms : the rank I held
 Was but the kind distinction which he gave me,
 To tempt my courage to deserve regard.
 Your sight, unhappy prince, would charm his eye ;
 That best and greatest monarch will behold
 With grief and joy those venerable wounds,
 And print embraces where your fetters bound you.
 All Paris will revere the cross's martyr.

Lus. Alas ! in times long past, I've seen its glory :
 When Philip the victorious liv'd, I fought
 Abreast with Montmorency and Melun,
 D'Estaing, De Neile, and the far-famous Courcy ;
 Names which were then the praise and dread of war.
 But what have I to do at Paris now ?
 I stand upon the brink of the cold grave ;
 That way my journey lies—to find, I hope,
 The King of kings, and ask the recompense
 For all my woes, long suffer'd for his sake.
 You gen'rons witnesses of my last hour,
 While I yet live, assist my humble prayers,
 And join the resignation of my soul.
 Nerestan ! Chatillon ! and you, fair mourner,
 Whose tears do honour to an old man's sorrows !
 Pity a father, the unhappiest sure

That ever felt the hand of angry heaven!
My eyes, though dying, still can furnish tears;
Half my long life they flow'd, and still will flow!
A daughter and three sons, my heart's proud hopes,
Were all torn from me in their tend'rest years:
My friend Chatillon knows, and can remember——

Cha. Would I were able to forget your woe.

Lus. Thou wert a pris'ner with me in Cæsarea,
And there beheld'st my wife and two dear sons
Perish in flames.

Cha. A captive, and in fetters,
I could not help 'em.

Lus. I know thou couldst not.
Oh, 'twas a dreadful scene! these eyes beheld it:
Husband and father, helpless I beheld it;
Deny'd the mournful privilege to die.
Oh, my poor children, whom I now deplore,
If ye are saints in heav'n, as sure ye are,
Look with an eye of pity on that brother,
That sister whom you left! If I have yet
Or son or daughter; for in early chains,
Far from their lost and unassisting father,
I heard that they were sent, with numbers more,
To this seraglio; hence to be dispers'd
In nameless remnants o'er the east, and spread
Our Christian miseries round a faithless world.

Cha. 'Twas true; for in the horrors of that day,
I snatch'd your infant daughter from her cradle;
When from my bleeding arms, fierce Saracens
Forc'd the lost innocent, who smiling lay
And pointed, playful, at the swarthy spoilers!
With her your youngest, then your only son,
Whose little life had reach'd the fourth sad year,
And just giv'n sense to feel his own misfortunes,
Was order'd to this city.

Ner. I too, hither,
Just at that fatal age, from lost Cæsarea,
Came in that crowd of undistinguish'd Christians.

Lus. You! came you thence? Alas! who knows but
you

Might heretofore have seen my two poor children.

[Looks up.

Ha, madam! that small ornament you wear,
Its form a stranger to this country's fashion,
How long has it been yours?

Zara. From my first birth, sir.

Ah, what! you seem surpris'd!—Why should this move
you?

Lus. Would you confide it to my trembling hands?

Zara. To what new wonders am I now reserv'd?

Oh, sir! what mean you?

Lus. Providence and heaven!

Oh, failing eyes, deceive ye not my hope?

Can this be possible?—Yes, yes, 'tis she!

This little cross—I know it by sure marks!

Oh! take me, heaven, while I can die with joy!

Zara. Oh, do not, sir, distract me! Rising thoughts,
And hopes, and fears, o'erwhelm me!

Lus. Tell me yet,

Has it remain'd for ever in your hands?

What, both brought captives from Cæsarea hither?

Zara. Both, both.

Lus. Their voice! their looks!

The living images of their dear mother!

O God! who seest my tears and know'st my thoughts,

Do not forsake me at this dawn of hope;

Strengthen my heart, too feeble for this joy.

Madam! Nerestan!—Help me, Chatillon!

[Rises.

Nerestan, hast thou on thy breast a scar,

Which ere Cæsarea fell, from a fierce hand,

Surprising us by night, my child receiv'd?

Ner. Bless'd hand!—I bear it.—Sir, the mark is
there!

Lus. Merciful heaven!

Ner. Oh, sir!—Oh, Zara, kneel!

[Kneels.

Zara. My father!—Oh!—

[Kneels.

Lus. Oh, my lost children!

Both. Oh!

Lus. My son! my daughter! lost in embracing you,
I would now die, lest this should prove a dream.

Cha. How touch'd is my glad heart to see their joy!

Lus. They shall not tear you from my arms—my children,

Again I find you—dear in wretchedness.

Oh, my brave son, and thou, my nameless daughter!

Now dissipate all doubt, remove all dread;

Has heaven, that gives me back my children, given 'em

Such as I lost them? come they Christians to me?

One weeps, and one declines a conscious eye!

Your silence speaks; too well I understand it.

Zara. I cannot, sir, deceive you; Osman's laws
Were mine; and Osman is not Christian.

Lus. Her words are thunder bursting on my head.

Worth not for thee, my son, I now should die.

Full sixty years I fought the Christian's cause;

Saw their doom'd temple fall, their power destroy'd:

Twenty, a captive, in a dungeon's depth;

Yet never for myself my tears sought heaven:

All for my children rose my fruitless prayers.

Yet what avails a father's wretched joy?

I have a daughter gain'd, and heaven an enemy.

Oh, my misguided daughter, lose not thy faith;

Reclaim thy birthright; think upon the blood

Of twenty Christian kings, that fills thy veins:

'Tis heroes' blood, the blood of saints and martyrs!

What would thy mother feel to see thee thus?

She and thy murder'd brothers!—think they call thee;

Think that thou see'st 'em stretch their bloody arms,

And weep to win thee from their murd'rer's bosom.

E'en in the place where thou betray'st thy God,

He died, my child, to save thee!

Thou tremblest—Oh! admit me to thy soul;

Kill not thy aged, thy afflicted father;

Shame not thy mother, nor renounce thy God.—

'Tis past; repentance dawns in thy sweet eyes;

I see bright truth descending to thy heart,

And now my long-lost child is found for ever.

Zara. Oh, my father!

Dear author of my life! inform me, teach me,
What should my duty do?

Lus. By one short word,
To dry up all my tears, and make life welcome,
Say thou art a Christian.

Zara. Sir, I am a Christian.

Lus. Receive her, gracious heaven! and bless her
for it.

Enter ORASMPN.

Oras. Madam, the sultan order'd me to tell you
That he expects you instant quit this place,
And bid your last farewell to these vile Christians.
You, captive Frenchmen, follow me; for you
It is my task to answer.

Cha. Still new miseries!

How cautious man should be, to say, "I'm happy!"

Lus. These are the times, my friends, to try our
firmness,

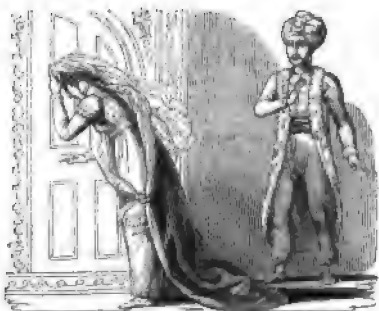
Our Christian firmness.

Zara. Alas, sir! Oh!

Lus. Oh, you!—I dare not name you!
Farewell! but, come what may, be sure remember
You keep the fatal secret: for the rest,
Leave all to heaven—be faithful, and be blest.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I.

Enter OSMAN and ORASMIN.

Osman. Orasmin, this alarm was false and groundless ;
Lewis no longer turns his arms on me ;
The French, grown weary by a length of woes,
Wish not at once to quit their fruitful plains,
And famish on Arabia's desert sands.
Their ships, 'tis true, have spread the Syrian seas :
And Lewis, hov'ring o'er the coast of Cyprus,
Alarms the fears of Asia.—But I've learn'd,
That, steering wide from our unmenac'd ports,
He points his thunder at th' Egyptian shore.
There let him war, and waste my enemies ;
Their mutual conflict will but fix my throne.—
Release those Christians ; I restore their freedom :
'Twill please their master, nor can weaken me.
Transport 'em, at my cost, to find their king.
I wish to have him know me. Carry thither
This Lusignan ; whom, tell him, I restore,
Because I cannot fear his fame in arms,

But love him for his virtue and his blood.
Tell him, my father, having conquer'd twice,
Condemn'd him to perpetual chains; but I
Have set him free, that I might triumph more.

Oras. The Christians gain an army in his name.

Osman. I cannot fear a sound.

Oras. But, sir, should *Lewis*—

Osman. Tell *Lewis*, and the world, it shall be so:
Zara propos'd it, and my heart approves.
Thy statesman's reason is too dull for love!
But I talk on, and waste the smiling moments.
For one long hour I yet defer my nuptials;
She would employ it in a conference
With that *Nerestan*, whom thou know'st—that Chris-
tian!

Oras. And have you, sir, indulg'd that strange desire?

Osman. What mean'st thou? They were infant slaves
together;

Friends should part kind, who are to meet no more.

When *Zara* asks, I will refuse her nothing:

Restraint was never made for those we love.

Down with those rigours of the proud seraglio!

I hate its laws; where blind austerity

Sinks virtue to necessity.—My blood

Disclaims your Asian jealousy; I hold

The fierce, free plainness of my *Soythian* ancestors,

Their open confidence, their honest hate,

Their love unfearing, and their anger told.

Go; the good Christian waits; conduct him to her;

Zara expects thee. What she wills, obey. [Exit.

Oras. Ho! Christian! enter.

Enter *NERESTAN*.

Wait a moment here.

Zara will soon approach: I go to find her. [Exit.

Ner. In what a state, in what a place, I leave her?

Oh, faith! Oh, father! Oh, my poor, lost sister!

She's here.

Enter *ZARA*.

Thank heaven, it is not then unlawful

To see you yet once more, my lovely sister!
Not all so happy!—We, who met but now,
Shall never meet again; for Lusignan——
We shall be orphans still, and want a father.

Zara. Forbid it, heaven!

Ner. His last sad hour's at hand.

That flow of joy, which follow'd our discovery,
Too strong and sudden for his age's weakness,
Wasting his spirits, dried the source of life,
And nature yields him up to time's demand.
Shall he not die in peace?—Oh! let no doubt
Disturb his parting moments with distrust;
Let me, when I return to close his eyes,
Compose his mind's impatience too, and tell him,
You are confirm'd a Christian!

Zara. Oh! may his soul enjoy, in earth and heaven,
Eternal rest; ner let one thought, one sigh,
One bold complaint of mine recall his cares!
But you have injur'd me, who still can doubt.
What! am I not your sister? and shall you
Refuse me credit? You suppose me light;
You, who should judge my honour by your own,
Shall you distrust a truth I dar'd avow,
And stamp apostate on a sister's heart?

Ner. Ah, do not misconceive me; if I err'd,
Affection, not distrust, misled my fear;
Your will may be a Christian, yet not you;
There is a sacred mark, a sign of faith,
A pledge of promise, that must firm your claim,
Wash you from guilt, and open heaven before you.
Swear, swear by all the woes we all have borne,
By all the martyr'd saints who call you daughter,
That you consent, this day, to seal our faith,
By that mysterious rite which waits your call.

Zara. I swear by heaven, and all its holy host,
Its saints, its martyrs, its attesting angels,
And the dread presence of its living author,
To have no faith but yours—to die a Christian!
Now tell me what this mystic faith requires.

Ner. To hate the happiness of Osman's throne,

And love that God, who, through his maze of woes,
Has brought us all, unhoping, thus together.
For me—I am a soldier, uninstructed,
Nor daring to instruct, though strong in faith :
But I will bring the ambassador of heaven,
To clear your views, and lift you to your God.
Be it your task to gain admission for him.
But where? from whom? Oh! thou immortal power!
Whence can we hope it, in this curs'd seraglio?
Who is this slave of Osman? Yes, this slave!
Does she not boast the blood of twenty kings?
Is not her race the same with that of Lewis?
Is she not Lusignan's unhappy daughter?
A Christian and my sister? yet a slave,
A willing slave! I dare not speak more plainly.

Zara. Cruel! go on—Alas! you do not know me.
At once, a stranger to my secret fate,
My pains, my fears, my wishes, and my power :
I am—I will be Christian—will receive
This holy priest with his mysterious blessing ;
I will not do nor suffer aught unworthy
Myself, my father, or my father's race.
But tell me, nor be tender on this point,
What punishment your Christian laws decree,
For an unhappy wretch, who, to herself
Unknown, and all abandon'd by the world,
Lost and enslav'd, has, in her sovereign master,
Found a protector, generous as great,
Has touch'd his heart, and given him all her own?

Ner. The punishment of such a slave should be
Death in this world, and pain in that to come.

Zara. I am that slave! Strike here, and save my
shame.

Ner. Destruction to my hopes! Can it be you?

Zara. It is! ador'd by Osman, I adore him :
This hour the nuptial rites will make us one.

Ner. What! marry Osman! Let the world grow
dark,
That the extinguish'd sun may hide thy shame!
Could it be thus, it were no crime to kill thee.

Zara. Strike, strike! I love him! yes, by heav'n, I love him.

Ner. Death is thy due; but not thy due from me:
Yet, were the honour of our house no bar,
My father's fame, and the too gentle laws
Of that religion which thou hast disgrac'd;
Did not the God thou quit'st hold back my arm;
Not there—I could not there—but by my soul,
I would rush, desp'rate, to the sultan's breast,
And plunge my sword in his proud heart who damns
thee.

Oh, shame! shame! shame! at such a time as this,
When Lewis, that awak'ner of the world,
Beneath the lifted cross makes Egypt pale,
And draws the sword of heaven to spread our faith;
Now to submit to see my sister doom'd
A bosom slave to him whose tyrant heart
But measures glory by the Christian's woe.
Yes, I will dare acquaint our father with it;
Departing Lusignan may live so long,
As just to bear thy shame, and die to 'scape it.

Zara. Stay, my too angry brother; stay, perhaps,
Zara has resolution great as thine:

'Tis cruel, and unkind. Thy words are crimes;
My weakness but misfortune. Dost thou suffer?
I suffer more. Oh! would to heaven this blood
Of twenty boasted kings would stop at once,
And stagnate in my heart! It then no more
Would rush in boiling fevers through my veins,
And every trembling drop be fill'd with Osman.
How has he lov'd me; how has he oblig'd me!
I owe thee to him. What has he not done,
To justify his boundless pow'r of charming?
For me he softens the severe decrees
Of his own faith; and is it just that mine
Should bid me hate him, but because he loves me?
No—I will be a Christian—but preserve
My gratitude as sacred as my faith;
If I have death to fear for Osman's sake,
It must be from his coldness, not his love.

Ner. I must at once condemn and pity thee.
Here then begin performance of thy vow ;
Here, in the trembling horrors of thy soul,
Promise thy king, thy father, and thy God,
Not to accomplish these detested nuptials,
Till first the rev'rend priest has clear'd your eyes,
Taught you to know, and given you claim to heaven.
Promise me this.

Zara. So bless me, heaven ! I do.
Go, hasten the good priest, I will expect him ;
But first return ; cheer my expiring father ;
Tell him I am, and will be, all he wishes me :
Tell him, to give him life 'twere joy to die.

Ner. I go. Farewell, farewell, unhappy sister !

[*Exit.*

Zara. I am alone ;—and now be just, my heart,
And tell me wilt thou dare betray thy God ?
What am I ? what am I about to be ?
Daughter of Lusignan, or wife to Osman ?
Am I a lover most, or most a Christian ?
What shall I do ? What heart has strength to bear
These double weights of duty ?—Help me, heaven !
To thy hard laws I render up my soul :
But, oh ! demand it back ; for now 'tis Osman's.

Re-enter OSMAN.

Osman. Shine out, appear, be found, my lovely Zara !
Impatient eyes attend, the rites expect thee,
And my devoted heart no longer brooks
This distance from its soft'ner :
Come, my slow love, the ceremonies wait thee ;
Come, and begin from this dear hour my triumph.

Zara. Oh, what a wretch am I ! Oh, grief ! Oh, love !

[*Aside.*

Osman. Nay, Zara, give me thy hand, and come.

Zara. Instruct me, heaven !

What I should say—alas ! I cannot speak.

Osman. Away ! this modest, sweet, reluctant trifling
But doubles my desires, and thy own beauties.

Zara. Ah, me !

Osman. Nay, but thou shouldst not be too cruel.

Zara. I can no longer bear it—Oh, my lord—

Osman. Ha! What? whence? how?

Zara. My lord, my sovereign!

Heaven knows this marriage would have been a bliss

Above my humble hopes: yet, witness, love!

Not from the grandeur of your throne, that bliss,

But from the pride of calling *Osman* mine.

But as it is—these Christians—

Osman. Christians! What!

How start two images into thy thoughts,

So distant, as the Christians and my love?

Zara. That good old Christian, rev'rend *Lusignan*,

Now dying, ends his life and woes together.

Osman. Well, let him die. What has thy heart to feel,

Thus pressing, and thus tender, from the death

Of an old, wretched Christian?—Thank our prophet,

Thou art no Christian.—Educated here,

Thy happy youth was taught our better faith:

Sweet as thy pity shines, 'tis now mistim'd.

What! though an aged suff'rer dies unhappy,

Why should his foreign fate disturb our joys?

Zara. Sir, if you love me, and would have me think
That I am truly dear—

Osman. Heaven! if I love?

Zara. Permit me—

Osman. What?

Zara. To desire—

Osman. Speak out.

Zara. The nuptial rites

May be deferr'd till—

Osman. What! Is that the voice
Of *Zara*?

Zara. Oh, I cannot bear his frown.

Osman. Of *Zara*!

Zara. It is dreadful to my heart,

To give you but a seeming cause for anger.

Pardon my grief—alas! I cannot bear it.

There is a painful terror in your eye

That pierces to my soul. Hid from your sight,
I go to make a moment's truce with tears,
And gather force to speak of my despair.

[Exit, disordered.]

Osman. I stand immoveable like senseless marble;
Horror had frozen my suspended tongue,
And an astonish'd silence robb'd my will
Of power to tell her that she shock'd my soul.
Spoke she to me? Sure I misunderstood her.
Could it be me she left?—What have I seen?

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, what a change is here!—She's gone;
And I permitted it, I know not how.

Oras. Perhaps you but accuse the charming fault
Of innocence, too modest oft in love.

Osman. But why, and whence those tears? those
looks? that flight?

That grief, so strongly stamp'd on every feature?
If it has been that Frenchman—What a thought!
How low, how horrid a suspicion that!
But tell me, didst thou mark 'em at their parting?
Didst thou observe the language of their eyes?
Hide nothing from me.—Is my love betray'd?
Tell me my whole disgrace.—Nay, if thou tremblest,
I hear thy pity speak, though thou art silent.

Oras. I tremble at the pangs I see you suffer.
Let not your angry apprehensions urge
Your faithful slave to irritate your anguish.
I did, 'tis true, observe some parting tears;
But they were tears of charity and grief.
I cannot think there was a cause deserving
This agony of passion.

Osman. Why, no—I thank thee—
Orasmin, thou art wise. It could not be
That I should stand expos'd to such an insult.
Thou know'st, had Zara meant me the offence,
She wants not wisdom to have hid it better.
How rightly didst thou judge!—Zara shall know it,
And thank thy honest service.—After all,

Might she not have some cause for tears, which I
Claim no concern in—but the grief it gives her?
What an unlikely fear—from a poor slave
Who goes to-morrow, and, no doubt, who wishes,
Nay, who resolves to see these climes no more.

Oras. Why did you, sir, against our country's custom,
Indulge him with a second leave to come?
He said he should return once more to see her.

Osman. Return! the traitor! he return! Dares he
Presume to press a second interview?
Would he be seen again? He shall be seen;
But dead. I'll punish the audacious slave,
To teach the faithless fair to feel my anger.
Be still, my transports; violence is blind:
I know my heart at once is fierce and weak.
Rather than fall

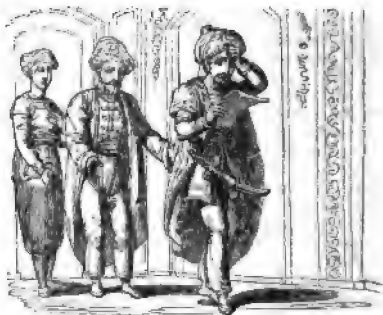
Beneath myself, I must, how dear so'er
It costs me, rise—till I look down on Zara!
Away; but mark me—these seraglio doors,
Against all Christians be they henceforth shut,
Close as the dark retreats of silent death.

[*Exit Orasmin.*

What have I done, just heaven! thy rage to move?
That thou should'st sink me down so low to love?

[*Exit,*

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I.

Enter ZARA and SELIMA.

Sel. Ah, madam! how at once I grieve your fate,
And how admire your virtue! Heaven permits,
And heaven will give you strength to bear misfortune;
To break these chains, so strong and yet so dear.

Zara. Oh that I could support the fatal struggle!

Sel. Th' Eternal aids your weakness, sees your will,
Directs your purpose, and rewards your sorrows.

Zara. Never had wretch more cause to hope he does.

Sel. What! though you here no more behold your
There is a father to be found above, [father:
Who can restore that father to his daughter.

Zara. But I have planted pain in Osman's bosom:
He loves me, even to death; and I reward him
With anguish and despair. How base! how cruel!
But I deserv'd him not; I should have been
Too happy, and the hand of heav'n repell'd me.

Sel. What! will you then regret the glorious loss
And hazard thus a vict'ry bravely won?

Zara. Inhuman vict'ry!—thou dost not know
This love so pow'rful; this sole joy of life;
This first best hope of earthly happiness,
Is yet less pow'rful in my heart than heaven.
To him who made that heart I offer it:
There, there I sacrifice my bleeding passion;
I pour before him ev'ry guilty tear;
I beg him to efface the fond impression,
And fill with his own image all my soul.
But, while I weep and sigh, repent and pray,
Remembrance brings the object of my love,
And ev'ry light illusion floats before him.
I see, I hear him, and again he charms;
Fills my glad soul, and shines 'twixt me and heav'n!
Oh, all ye royal ancestors! Oh, father!
Mother! You Christians, and the Christians' God!
You who deprive me of this gen'rous lover!
If you permit me not to live for him,
Let me not live at all; and I am bless'd.

Sel. Ah! despair not;
Trust your eternal helper, and be happy.

Zara. Why, what has Osma'n done, that he too should
not?

Has heaven so nobly form'd his heart to hate it?
Gen'rous and just, beneficent and brave,
Were he but Christian—What can man be more?
I wish, methinks, this rev'rend priest was come
To free me from these doubts, which shake my soul:
Yet know not why I should not dare to hope,
That heav'n, whose mercy all confess and feel,
Will pardon and approve th' alliance wish'd.
Perhaps it seats me on the throne of Syria,
To tax my pow'r for these good Christians' comfort.
'Thou know'st the mighty Saladine, who first
Conquer'd this empire from my father's race,
Who, like my Osman, charm'd th' admiring world,
Drew breath, though Syrian, from a Christian mother.

Sel. What mean you, madam? Ah, you do not see—

Zara. Yes, yes, I see it all; I am not blind:
I see my country, and my race condemn me;
I see that, spite of all, I still love Osman.

What if I now go throw me at his feet,
And tell him there sincerely what I am?

Sel. Consider—that might cost your brother's life,
Expose the Christians, and betray you all.

Zara. You do not know the noble heart of Osman.

Sel. I know him the protector of a faith,
Sworn enemy to ours: the more he loves,
The less will he permit you to profess
Opinions which he hates. To-night the priest,
In private introduc'd, attends you here;
You promis'd him admission.

Zara. Would I had not!
I promis'd too to keep this fatal secret;
My father's urg'd command requir'd it of me;
I must obey, all dangerous as it is:
Compell'd to silence, Osman is enrag'd,
Suspicion follows, and I lose his love.

Enter OSMAN.

Osman. Madam, there was a time when my charm'd
Made it a virtue to be lost in love; [heart
When, without blushing, I indulg'd my flame,
And every day still made you dearer to me.
You taught me, madam, to believe my love
Rewarded and return'd; nor was that hope,
Methinks, too bold for reason. Emperors
Who choose to sigh devoted at the feet
Of beauties, whom the world conceive their slaves,
Have fortune's claim, at least, to sure success:
But 'twere profane to think of power in love.
Dear as my passion makes you, I decline
Possession of her charms, whose heart's another's.
You will not find me a weak, jealous lover,
By coarse reproaches, giving pain to you,
And shaming my own greatness: wounded deeply,
Yet shunning and disdaining low complaint,
I come—to tell you——

Zara. Give my trembling heart
A moment's respite.

Osman. Osman, in every trial, shall remember
That he is emperor. Whate'er I suffer,

'Tis due to honour that I give up you,
And to my injur'd bosom take despair,
Rather than shamefully possess you sighing,
Convinc'd those sighs were never meant for me.
Go, madam; you are free—from Osman's pow'r:
Expect no wrongs; but see his face no more. [Exit]

Zara. At last 'tis come—the fear'd, the murd'ring mo-
Is come; and I am curs'd by earth and heaven!

[Throws herself on the Ground.]

If it is true that I am lov'd no more;

If you——

Osman. It is true, my fame requires it;
It is too true that I unwilling leave you;
That I at once renounce you and adore——
Zara, you weep!

Zara. If I am doom'd to lose you!
If I must wander o'er an empty world,
Unloving and unlov'd. Oh! yet do justice
To the afflicted; do not wrong me doubly:
Punish me, if 'tis needful to your peace,
But say not I deserv'd it.
But, ah! my heart was never known to Osman.
May heav'n, that punishes, for ever hate me,
If I regret the loss of aught but you.

Osman. Rise!

What! is it love to force yourself to wound
The heart you wish to gladden? But I find
Lovers least know themselves; for I believ'd
That I had taken back the power I gave you;
Yet see! you did but weep, and have resum'd me!
Proud as I am, I must confess one wish
Evades my power—the blessing to forget you.
Zara, thy tears were form'd to teach disdain,
That softness can disarm it. 'Tis decreed,
I must for ever love; but from what cause,
If thy consenting heart partakes my fires,
Art thou reluctant to a blessing meant me?
Speak! is it artifice?

O! spare the needless pains: art was not made
For Zara. Art, however innocent,
Looks like deceiving; I abhor'd it ever.

Zara. Alas! I have no art; not even enough
To hide this love, and this distress you give me.

Osman. New riddles! Speak with plainness to my
What canst thou mean? [soul;

Zara. I have no power to speak it.

Osman. Is it some secret dangerous to my state?
Is it some Christian plot grown ripe against me?

Zara. Lives there a wretch so vile as to betray you?
Osman is bless'd beyond the reach of fear:
Fears and misfortunes threaten only *Zara*.

Osman. Why threaten *Zara*?

Zara. Permit me at your feet,
Thus trembling, to beseech a favour from you.

Osman. A favour! Oh, you guide the will of *Osman*.

Zara. Ah! would to heav'n our duties were united:
But this day,

But this one sad, unhappy day, permit me,
Alone, and far divided from your eye,
To cover my distress, lest you, too tender,
Should see and share it with me: from to-morrow
I will not have a thought conceal'd from you.

Osman. If it must be it must. Be pleas'd, my will
Takes purpose from your wishes; and consent
Depends not on my choice, but your decree:
Go: but remember how he loves, who thus
Finds a delight in pain, because you give it.

Zara. It gives me more than pain to make you feel it.

Osman. And can you, *Zara*, leave me?

Zara. Alas, my lord. [Exit.

Osman. It should be yet, methinks, too soon to fly
Too soon, as yet, to wrong my easy faith. [me;

The more I think, the less I can conceive
What hidden cause should raise such strange despair!

Now, when her hopes have wings, and every wish
Is courted to be lively! When I love,

And joy and empire press her to their bosom;
To see her eyes through tears shine mystic love!

Yet, was I blameless? No—I was too rash;

I have felt jealousy, and spoke it to her;
I have distrusted her—and still she loves:

—A cruel atonement that!—I remark'd,

Ev'n while she wept, her soul a thousand times
Sprung to her lips, and long'd to leap to mine,
With honest, ardent utt'rance of her love.
Who can possess a heart so low, so base,
To look such tenderness, and yet have none?

Enter MELIDOR, with ORASMIN.

Mel. This letter, great disposer of the world!
Address'd to Zara, and in private brought,
Your faithful guards this moment intercepted,
And humbly offer to your sovereign eye.

Osman. Come nearer—give it me—To Zara!—Rise!
Bring it with speed. Shame on your flatt'ring distance!
[*Advances, and snatches the Letter.*

Be honest, and approach me like a subject
Who serves the prince, yet not forgets the man.

Mel. One of the Christian slaves, whom late your
bounty

Releas'd from bondage, sought with heedful guile,
Unnotic'd to deliver it. Discover'd,
He waits in chains his doom from your decree.

Osman. Leave me. [*Exit Melidor*] I tremble, as if
something fatal

Were meant me from this letter. Should I read it?

Oras. Who knows but it contains some happy truth,
That may remove all doubts, and calm your heart?

Osman. Be as 'twill, it shall be read.

[*Opens the Letter.*

Fate, be thy call obey'd.—Orasmin, mark—
Hell! tortures! death! and woman!—What, Orasmin,
Are we awake?—Heard'st thou?—Can this be Zara?

Oras. Would I had lost all sense! for what I heard
Has cover'd my afflicted heart with horror.

Osman. Thou seest how I am treated.

Oras. Monstrous treason!

To an affront like this you cannot, must not,
Remain insensible. You, who but now,
From the most slight suspicion, felt such pain,
Must, in the horror of so black a guilt,
Find an effectual cure, and banish love.

Osman. Seek her this instant—go, Orasmin, fly!

Show her this letter: bid her read and tremble:

Then, in the rising horrors of her guilt,

Stab her unfaithful breast, and let her die.

Say, while thou strik'st—Stay, stay, return and pity

Would I were dead!

[*me.*

Would I had died, unconscious of this shame!

Oras. Never did prince receive so bold a wrong.

Osman. See here detected this infernal secret!

This fountain of her tears, which my weak heart

Mistook for marks of tenderness and pain!

Why! what a reach has woman to deceive!

Under how fine a veil of grief and fear

Did she propose retirement till to-morrow!

And I, blind dotard! gave the fool's consent,

Sooth'd her, and suffer'd her to go!—She parted,

Dissolv'd in tears; and parted to betray me!

Oras. Could you, my gracious lord! forgive my zeal,
You would—

Osman. I know it—thou art right—I'll see her;

I'll tax her in thy presence; I'll upbraid her;

I'll let her learn—Go—find, and bring her to me.

Oras. Believe me, sir, your threat'nings, your com-

What will they all produce but Zara's tears, [plaints,

To quench this fancied anger? Your lost heart,

Seduc'd against itself, will search but reasons

To justify the guilt which gives it pain:

Rather conceal from Zara this discovery;

And let some trusty slave convey the letter,

Re-clos'd to her own hand: then shall you learn,

Spite of her frauds, disguise, and artifice,

The firmness, or abasement of her soul.

Osman. Thy counsel charms me! We'll about it now.

Here, take this fatal letter: choose a slave

Whom yet she never saw, and who retains

His tried fidelity—dispatch—be gone. [*Exit Orasmin.*

Now whither shall I turn my eyes and steps

The surest way to shun her, and give time

For this discovering trial?—Heaven! she's here!

Re-enter ZARA.

So, madam! fortune will befriend my cause,

And free me from your fetters.—You are met
Most aptly, to dispel a new-ris'n doubt,
That claims the finest of your arts to gloss it.
Unhappy each by other, it is time
To end our mutual pain, that both may rest.
You want not generosity, but love;
My pride forgotten, my obtruded throne,
My favours, cares, respect, and tenderness,
Touching your gratitude, provok'd regard;
Till, by a length of benefits besieg'd,
Your heart submitted, and you thought 'twas love:
But you deceiv'd yourself, and injur'd me.
There is, I'm told, an object more deserving
Your love than Osman: I would know his name.
Be just, nor trifle with my anger: tell me
Now, while expiring pity struggles faint;
While I have yet, perhaps, the power to pardon,
Give up the bold invader of my claim,
And let him die to save thee. Thou art known.
Think and resolve. While I yet speak, renounce him;
While yet the thunder rolls suspended, stay it;
Let thy voice charm me, and recall my soul,
That turns averse, and dwells no more on Zara.

Zara. Can it be Osman speaks, and speaks to Zara?
Learn, cruel! learn that this afflicted heart,
This heart which heaven delights to prove by tortures,
Did it not love, has pride and power to shun you.
I know not whether heaven, that frowns upon me,
Has destin'd my unhappy days for yours;
But, be my fate or bless'd or curst, I swear,
By honour, dearer ev'n than life or love,
Could Zara be but mistress of herself,
She would with cold regard look down on kings,
And, you alone excepted, fly 'em all.
And to this sacred truth, attesting heaven!
I call thy dreadful notice!—If my heart
Deserves reproach, 'tis for, but not from, Osman.

Osman. What! does she yet presume to swear sincerity?

Oh, boldness of unblushing perjury!
Had I not seen, had I not read, such proof

Of her light falsehood as extinguish'd doubt,
I could not be a man, and not believe her.

Zara. Alas, my lord! what cruel fears have seiz'd you?
What harsh, mysterious words were those I heard?

Osman. What fears should Osman feel, since Zara loves

Zara. I cannot live, and answer to your voice [him?
In that reproachful tone; your angry eye
Trembles with fury while you talk of love.

Osman. Since Zara loves him!

Zara. Is it possible

Osman should disbelieve it?—Again, again
Your late repented violence returns.

Alas! what killing frowns you dart against me!

Can it be kind, can it be just to doubt me?

Osman. No! I can doubt no longer.—You may retire.

[*Exit Zara.*

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, she's perfidious, even beyond
Her sex's undiscover'd power of seeming.
Say, hast thou chosen a slave?—Is he instructed?
Haste to detect her vileness and my wrongs.

Oras. Punctually I have obey'd your whole command:
But have you arm'd, my lord, your injer'd heart,
With coldness and indifference? Can you bear,
All painless and unmov'd, the false one's shame?

Osman. Orasmin, I adore her more than ever.

Oras. My lord! my emperor! forbid it, heaven!

Osman. I have discern'd a gleam of distant hope.

Now hear me with attention.—Soon as night
Has thrown her welcome shadows o'er the palace;
When this Nerestan, this ungrateful Christian,
Shall lurk in expectation near our walls,
Be watchful that our guards surprise and seize him;
Then, bound in fetters and o'erwhelm'd with shame,
Conduct the daring traitor to my presence:
But, above all, be sure you hurt not Zara;
Mindful to what supreme excess I love. [*Exit Orasmin.*
On this last trial all my hopes depend.

Prophet, for once thy kind assistance lend,
Dispel the doubts that rack my anxious breast:
If Zara's innocent, thy Osman's bless'd.

[*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I.

Enter ZARA and SELIMA.

Zara. Sooth me no longer with this vain desire ;
To a recluse like me, who dares henceforth
Presume admission!—The seraglio is shut;
Barr'd and impassable, as death to time!
My brother ne'er must hope to see me more.—
How now! what unknown slave accosts us here?

Enter MELIDOR.

Mel. This letter, trusted to my hands, receive,
In secret witness I am wholly yours.

[Zara reads the Letter.]

Sel. Thou everlasting Ruler of the world!
Shed thy wish'd mercy on our hopeless tears;
Redeem us from the hands of hated infidels,
And save my princess from the breast of Osman.

[Aside.]

Zara. I wish, my friend, the comfort of your counsel.

Sel. Retire—you shall be call'd—wait near—go, leave
us.

[Exit Melidor.]

Zara. Read this, and tell me what I ought to answer :
For I would gladly hear my brother's voice.

Sel. Say rather you would hear the voice of heaven.
'Tis not your brother calls you, but your God.

Zara. I know it, nor resist his awful will ;
Thou know'st that I have bound my soul by oath ;
But can I, ought I, to engage myself,
My brother, and the Christians, in this danger ?

Sel. 'Tis not their danger that alarms your fears ;
Your love speaks loudest to your shrinking soul.
This tiger, savage in his tenderness,
Courts with contempt, and threatens amidst softness ;
Yet cannot your neglected heart efface
His sated, fix'd impression !

Zara. What reproach
Can I with justice make him ?—I indeed
Have given him cause to hate me !
Was not his throne, was not his temple ready ?
Did he not court his slave to be a queen,
And have not I declin'd it ?—I who ought
To tremble, conscious of affronted power !
Have not I triumph'd o'er his pride and love ?
Seen him submit his own high will to mine,
And sacrifice his wishes to my weakness ?

Sel. Talk we no more of this unhappy passion :
What resolution will your virtue take ?

Zara. All things combine to sink me to despair :
From the seraglio death alone will free me.
I long to see the Christians' happy climes ;
Yet in the moment while I form that prayer,
I sigh a secret wish to languish here.
How sad a state is mine ! my restless soul
All ignorant what to do, or what to wish :
My only perfect sense is that of pain.
Oh, guardian heaven ! protect my brother's life,
For I will meet him, and fulfil his prayer :
Then, when from Solyma's unfriendly walls,
His absence shall unbind his sister's tongue,
Osman shall learn the secret of my birth,
My faith unshaken, and my deathless love ;

He will approve my choice, and pity me.
I'll send my brother word he may expect me.
Call in the faithful slave. God of my fathers!

[*Exit Selima.*]

Let thy hand save me, and thy will direct.

Re-enter MELIDOR, with SELIMA.

Go—tell the Christian who intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expect and introduce him to his wish.

Away—the sultan comes; he must not find us.

[*Ereunt Zara and Selima.*]

Enter OSMAN and ORASMIN.

Osman. Swifter, ye hours, move on; my fury glows
Impatient, and would push the wheels of time.
How now? What message dost thou bring? Speak boldly.
What answer gave she to the letter sent her? [*paus'd*;

Mel. She blush'd, and trembled, and grew pale, and
Then blush'd, and read it, and again grew pale;
And wept, and smil'd, and doubted, and resolv'd:
For after all this race of varied passions,
When she had sent me out, and call'd me back,
Tell him (she cried) who has intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expect and introduce him to his wish.

Osman. Enough; be gone! I have no ear for more.

[*To the Slave.*]

Leave me, thou too, Orasmin. Leave me, life,

For ev'ry mortal aspect moves my hate: [*To Orasmin.*]

Leave me to my distraction.

[*Exit Orasmin.*]

Who am I? Heav'n! Who am I? What resolve I?

Zara! Nerestan! sound these words like names

Decreed to join? Why pause I? Perish Zara—

Would I could tear her image from my heart.

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin! Friend! return, I cannot bear

This absence from thy reason: 'twas unkind,

'Twas cruel to obey me, thus distress'd,
And wanting power to think, when I had lost thee.
How goes the hour? Has he appear'd, this rival?
Perish the shameful sound. This villain Christian!
Has he appear'd below?

Oras. Silent and dark

Th' unbreathing world is hush'd, as if it heard
And listen'd to your sorrows.

Osman. Oh, treach'rous night!

Thou lend'st thy ready veil to ev'ry treason,
And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.
Hark! Heard'st thou nothing?

Oras. My lord.

Osman. A voice, like dying groans!

Oras. I listen, but can hear nothing.

Osman. Again! look out—he comes——

Oras. Nor tread of mortal foot, nor voice I hear:
The still seraglio lies, profoundly plung'd
In death-like silence! nothing stirs.—The air
Is soft, as infant sleep, no breathing wing
Steals through the shadows to awaken night. {these,

Osman. Horrors a thousand times more dark than
Benight my suff'ring soul. Thou dost not know
To what excess of tenderness I lov'd her:
I knew no happiness but what she gave me,
Nor could have felt a mis'ry but for her!
Pity this weakness—mine are tears, *Orasmin*,
That fall not oft, nor lightly.

Oras. Tears! Oh, heaven!

Oh, my unhappy lord! I tremble for you——

Osman. Do—tremble at my sufferings, at my love;
At my revenge too, tremble—for 'tis due,
And will not be deluded.

Oras. Hark! I hear

The steps of men along the neighb'ring wall!

Osman. Fly! seize him! 'tis *Nerestan*! Wait no chains,
But drag him down to my impatient eye. [*Exit Oras.*

Enter ZARA and SELIMA, in the dark.

Zara. Where art thou, *Selima*? Give me thy hand.

It is so dark, I tremble as I step,
With fears and startings, never felt till now!

Osman. Damnation! 'tis her voice! the well-known
sound

That has so often charm'd me into baseness!

[*Draws a Dagger.*]

Revenge, stand firm, and intercept his wishes!

Revenge! On whom? No matter: earth and heaven

Would blush, should I forbear: now, *Zara*, now!

[*Drops the Dagger.*]

I must not, cannot strike, the starting steel,

Unwilling, flies my hand, and shuns to wound her.

Zara. This is the private path; come nearer, lead me.

Are we not notio'd, think'st thou?

Sel. Fear not, madam;

It cannot now be long, ere we shall meet him.

Osman. That word has given me back my ebbing rage.

[*Recovers the Dagger.*]

Zara. I walk in terror, and my heart forebodes.

Who's there? *Nerestan*! Is it you? O welcome——

Osman. [*Stabs her.*] This to thy heart. 'Tis not the
traitor meets thee,

'Tis the betray'd, who writes it in thy blood.

Zara. Oh, gracious heaven! receive my parting soul,
And take thy trembling servant to thy mercy. [*Dies.*]

Osman. Soul! then revenge has reach'd thee. I will now

Haste from this fatal place: I cannot leave her!

Whom did I strike? Was this the act of love?

Swallow me, earth! She's silent! *Zara's* dead!

And should I live to see returning day,

'Twill show me but her blood! show me left joyless,

In a wide, empty world, with nothing round me,

But penitence and pain: and yet 'twas just.

Hark! Destiny has sent her lover to me,

To fill my vengeance, and restore my joy.

Re-enter ORASMIN, with NERESTAN.

Approach, thou wretch! thou more than ours'd! come
near!

Thou who, in gratitude for freedom gain'd,

Hast giv'n me miseries beyond thy own!
Thou heart of hero with a traitor's soul!
Are my commands obey'd?

Ora. All is prepar'd.

Osman. Thy wanton eyes look round in search of her
Whose love, descending to a slave like thee,
From my dishonour'd hand receiv'd her doom.
See! where she lies——

Ner. Oh, fatal, rash mistake!

Osman. Dost thou behold her, slave?

Ner. Unhappy sister!

Osman. Sister! Didst thou say sister? If thou didst,
Bless me with deafness, heaven!

Ner. Tyrant! I did.

She was my sister. All that now is left thee,
Dispatch—From my distracted heart drain next
The remnant of the royal Christian blood!
Old Lusignan, expiring in my arms,
Sent his too wretched son, with his last blessing,
To his now murder'd daughter!
Would I had seen the bleeding innocent!
I would have liv'd to speak to her in death;
Would have awaken'd in her languid heart
A livelier sense of her abandon'd God;
That God, who left by her, forsook her too,
And gave the poor lost sufferer to thy rage.

Osman. Thy sister! Lusignan her father! Solima!
Can this be true? and have I wrong'd thee, Zara?

Sel. Thy love was all the cloud 'twixt her and heav'n!

Osman. Be dumb! for thou art base, to add distraction
To my already more than bleeding heart.
And was thy love sincere? What then remains?

Ner. Why should a tyrant hesitate on murder!
There now remains but mine of all the blood,
Which through thy father's cruel reign and thine,
Has never ceas'd to stream on Syria's sands.
Restore a wretch to his unhappy race;
Nor hope that torments, after such a scene,
Can force one feeble groan to feast thy anger.
I waste my fruitless words in empty air;

The tyrant, o'er the bleeding wound he made,
Hangs his unmoving eye, and heeds not me.

Osman. Oh, Zara!

Oras. Alas, my lord, return! Whither would grief
Transport your gen'rous heart? This Christian dog—

Osman. Take off his fetters, and observe my will:
To him and all his friends, give instant liberty:
Pour a profusion of the richest gifts
On these unhappy Christians; and when heap'd
With vary'd benefits, and charg'd with riches,
Give 'em safe conduct to the nearest port.

Oras. But, sir——

Osman. Reply not, but obey.

Fly—nor dispute thy master's last command,
Thy prince, who orders—and thy friend, who loves thee!
Go—lose no time—farewell—be gone—and thou!
Unhappy warrior—yet less lost than I——
Haste from our bloody land, and to thy own
Convey this poor pale object of my rage.
Thy king, and all his Christians, when they hear
Thy miseries, shall mourn 'em with their tears;
But, if thou tell'st 'em mine, and tell'st 'em truly,
They who shall hate my crime, shall pity me.
Take too, this poniard with thee, which my hand
Has stain'd with blood far dearer than my own;
Tell 'em—with this I murder'd her I lov'd;
The noblest and most virtuous among women:
The soul of innocence, and pride of truth:
Tell 'em I laid my empire at her feet:
Tell 'em I plung'd my dagger in her blood:
Tell 'em I so ador'd—and thus reveng'd her.

[Stabs himself.]

Rev'rence this hero, and conduct him safe.

[Dies.]

Ner. Direct me, great inspirer of the soul!
How I should act, how judge in this distress!
Amazing grandeur! and detested rage!
Ev'n I, amidst my tears, admire this foe,
And mourn his death, who liv'd to give me woe.

[Curtain falls.]

EPILOGUE.

HERE take a surfeit, sirs, of being jealous,
And shun the pains that plague those Turkish fellows :
Where love and death join hands, their darts confound-
ing :

Save us, good heaven, from this new way of wounding.
Curs'd climate! where to cards a lone-left woman
Has only one of her black guards to summon!
Sighs, and sits mop'd with her tame beast to gaze at:
And that cold treat, is all the game she plays at!
For, should she once some abler hand be trying,
Poniard's the word! and the first deal is—dying!

'Slife! should the bloody whim get round in Britain,
Where woman's freedom has such heights to sit on;
Dagger, provok'd, would bring on desolation :
And murder'd belles unpeople half the nation!

Fain would I hope this play, to move compassion ;
And live to hunt suspicion out of fashion.
Four motives strongly recommend the lover's
Hate of this weakness that our scene discovers.

First then—A woman will or won't, depend on't ;
If she will do't, she will; and there's an end on't.
But if she won't, since safe and sound your trust is,
Fear is affront, and jealousy injustice.

Next—he who bids his dear do what she pleases,
Blunts wedlock's edge, and all its tortures eases ;
For—not to feel your suff'rings, is the same
As not to suffer: all the diff'rence—name.

Thirdly—The jealous husband wrongs his honour ;
No wife goes lame, without some hurt upon her :
And the malicious world will still be guessing :
Who oft dines out, dislikes her own cook's dressing.

Fourth and lastly—to conclude my lecture,
If you would fix the inconstant wife—respect her.
She who perceives her virtues over-rated,
Will fear to have the account more justly stated ;
And borrowing, from her pride the good wife seeming,
Grow really such—to merit your esteeming.

A COMIC CHORUS;

Or INTERLUDES designed to be sung between the Acts
of ZARA.

PROLOGUE.

- She.* So, sir, you're a man of your word.
He. Who'd break it when summon'd by you?
She. Very fine that; but pray have you heard
What it is you are summon'd to do?
He. Not a word; but expected to see
Something new in the musical way.
She. Why this author has cast you and me
As a prologue, it seems, to his play.
He. What then is its tuneful name,
Robin Hood of the Greenwood tree?
Or what good old ballad of fame
Has he built into tra-go-dy?
She. Though he rails against songs, he thought fit
Most gravely to urge and implore us,
In aid of his tragical wit,
To erect ourselves into a chorus. [*Laughing.*
He. A chorus! what's that—a composing
Of groans to the rants of his madness?
She. No; he hinders the boxes from dozing,
By mixing some spirit with sadness.
He. So then—'tis our task, I suppose,
To sing sober sense into relish;
Strike up at each tragical close,
And unheeded moral embellish.
She. 'Twas the custom, you know, once in Greece,
And if here 'tis not witty 'tis new.
He. Well then, when you find an act cease,
[*Turning to the Boxes.*
Tremble ladies——
She. And gentlemen too. [To the Men.
If I give not the beaux good advice, [Merrily.
Let me dwindle to recitative!
He. Nor will I to the belles be more nice,
When I catch 'em but here to receive,

She. If there's aught to be learnt from the play,
 I shall sit in a nook here behind,
 Popping out in the good ancient way,
 Now and then, with a piece of mind.

He. But suppose that no moral should rise
 Worth the ears of the brave or the fair!

She. Why we'll then give the word, and advise—
 Face about, and stand all as ye were.

AFTER THE FIRST ACT.

SONG, IN DUET.

He. The sultan's a bridegroom; the slaves are set free,
 And none must presume to wear fetters but he!

Before honeymoon,
 Love's fiddle's in tune;
 So we think (silly souls)! 'tis always to be:
 For the man that is blind—how should he foresee?

She. I hate these hot blades, who so fiercely begin;
 To balk a rais'd hope is a cowardly sin!
 The maid that is wise, let her always procure
 Rather a grave than a spirited wooer:

What she loses at breakfast, at supper she'll win.
 But your amorous violence never endures:
 For to dance without doors
 Is the way to be weary before we get in.

He. Pray how does it happen, that passions so gay,
 Blooms, fades, and falls away,
 Like the rose of this morn, that at night must decay?
 Woman, I fear,
 Does one thing appear,
 But is found quite another when look'd on too near.

She. Ah no,
 Not so;
 'Tis the fault of you men, who with flames of desire
 Set your palates on fire,
 And dream not that eating will appetite tire:

So resolve in your heart,
 To do nothing but eat,
 Till, alas! on a sudden, you sleep o'er your meat.
 Therefore learn, O ye fair——

He. And you, lovers, take care——

She. That you trust not beforehand.

He. That you trust not at all.

She. Man was born to deceive.

He. Woman form'd to believe.

Both. Trust not one of us all!

For to stand on sure ground is the way not to fall

AFTER THE SECOND ACT.

SOLO, TO A FLUTE.

Oh, jealousy! thou bane of bleeding love!

Ah, how unhappy we!

Boom'd by the partial powers above,

Eternal slaves to thee!

Not more unstead than lovers' hearts the wind!

This moment dying—and the next, unkind.

Ah! wavering weak desires of frail mankind!

With pleading passion ever to pursue,

Yet triumph, only to undo.

Go to the deeps below, thou joyless fiend,

And never rise again to sow despair!

Nor you, ye heedless fair, occasions lend

To blast your blooming hopes, and bring on care.

Never conclude your innocence secure;

Prudence alone makes love endure.

[As she is going off, he meets her, and pulls her back, detaining her while he sings what follows.]

Ever, ever, doubt the fair in sorrow,

Mourning, as if they felt compassion:

Yet what they weep for to-day—to-morrow,

They'll be first to laugh into fashion.

None are betray'd, if they trust not the charmer;
 Jealousy guards the weak from falling.
 Would you ever catch, you must oft alarm her:
 Hearts to deceive is a woman's calling.

*[After the Song, he lets her go, and they join
 in a Duet.]*

She. Come let us be friends, and no longer abuse,
 Condemn, and accuse
 Each other.

He. Would you have us agree, you must fairly confess,
 The love we caress,
 We smother.

She. I am loath to think that.

He. Yet you know it is true.

She. Well, what if I do?
 No matter.

He. Could you teach us a way to love on, without strife?

She. Suit the first part of life
 To the latter.

He. 'Tis an honest advice; for when love is new blown,
 Gay colours are shown,
 Too glaring.

She. Then, alas, for poor wives! comes a blust'ring day,
 And blows 'em away.
 Most scaring!

AFTER THE THIRD ACT.

He, alone.

Mark, oh, ye beauties! gay and young,
 Mark the painful woes and weeping,
 That from forc'd concealment sprung,
 Punish the sin of secret-keeping.
 Tell then, nor veil a willing heart,
 When the lover, lov'd, alarms it;
 But, to sooth the pleasing smart,
 Whisper the glowing wish that warms it.

She that would hide the gentle flame,
 Does but teach her hope to languish ;
 She that boldly tells her aim,
 Flies from the path that leads to anguish.
 Not that too far your trust should go ;
 All that you say, to all discover ;—
 All that you do, but two should know,
 One of 'em you, and one your lover.

[*She meets him going off.*]

She. Ah! man, thou wert always a traitor,
 Thou giv'st thy advice to betray ;
 Ah! form'd for a rover by nature,
 Thou leader of love the wrong way.
 Would women let women advise them,
 They could not so easily stray ;
 'Tis trusting to lovers supplies 'em
 With will and excuse to betray.
 She's safe, who, in guard of her passion,
 Far, far, from confessing her pain,
 Keeps silence in spite of the fashion,
 Nor suffers her eyes to explain.

AFTER THE FOURTH ACT.

DUET.

She. Well, what do you think—of these sorrows and
 joys,
 These calms and these whirlwinds—this silence and
 noise?

Which love, in the bosom of man, employs?

He. For my part, would lovers be govern'd by me,
 Not one of you women so wish'd for should be,
 Since here we a proof of your mischief see.

She. Why, what would you do to escape the distress?

He. I would do—I would do—by my soul I can't
 guess—

She. Poor wretch, by my soul, I imagin'd no less.
 Come, come ; let me tell you, these tempests of love,
 Did but blow up desire, its briskness to prove,
 Which else would—you know—too lazily move.

Where women like logs of a make to lie stiff,
Men would sleep and grow dull; but our absolute will
Sets life all a whirling, like wheels in a mill.

He. Ambition in woman; like valour in man,
Tempts danger, from which they'd be safe if they ran:
And once get 'em in—get 'em out if you can.

She. Pray, what will you give me to teach you the
trick,

To keep your wife pleas'd either healthy or sick?

He. The man who hits that, sure, must touch to the
quick!

She. Learn this, and depend on a life without pain,
Say nothing to vex her, yet let her complain;
Submit to your fate, and disturb not her reign:
Be mop'd when she's sad, and be pleas'd when she's gay,
Believe her, and trust her, and give her—her way:
For want of this rule—there's the devil to pay.

Both. For want of this rule—there's the devil to pay.

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